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**ANNE MADELEINE DE RÉMUSAT,  
OF MARSEILLES.**



THE  
NUN OF THE ORDER OF THE  
VISITATION,

BY NAME,  
ANNE MADELEINE DE RÉMUSAT,  
OF MARSEILLES,

CALLED  
THE SECOND MARGARET MARY  
OF THE SACRED HEART.

BY  
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THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SONS,  
London and Derby.

1879.





TO THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION

Sainte Marie,

OF WHICH ANNE MADELINE WAS ONE OF THE MOST  
GLORIOUS ORNAMENTS;

TO THE COMPANY OF JESUS,

WHO GAVE HER AN ENLIGHTENED GUIDE,

IN THE PERSON OF

THE PERE CLAUDE FRANCOIS MILLEY;

To the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Jesus,

WHOSE PROFESSION IT IS TO RENDER TO THE

SACRED HEART

THE SPECIAL HOMAGE OF REPARATION AND OF LOVE

THAT IT RECLAIMS.



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## NOTICE.

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In the composition of this work we have chiefly consulted:—

### *I. The Writings of Sœur de Rémusat.*

Fragments of Memoirs and of Letters addressed by Sœur Anne Madeleine to her directors, or to her superiors. Monseigneur de Belzunce was at first unwilling that Sœur Rémusat should write her memoirs, as the nuns of the Visitation wished; but it is probable that he afterwards withdrew his opposition. He must subsequently himself have been in possession of some of the writings of the sister; for we know that he sent some to Queen Clementina of England, who, after the death of Sœur Rémusat, begged as a favour that some souvenir of the sister might be granted her. In her gratitude the dethroned queen wrote as follows to the Bishop of Marseilles:

“Monsieur the Bishop of Marseilles,

“I have received with pleasure the pious document that you have sent me. It will be the

more valued by me, since it is written by a holy nun, and comes from you whom I so highly esteem. I cannot do less than thank you, and assure you of all the due feelings of regard and esteem with which, Monsieur the Bishop of Marseilles, I am,

“Your attached friend,

“CLEMENTINA, QUEEN.”

Another portion of the writings or memoirs of the sister remained in the possession of the First Monastery of the Visitation at Marseilles. In the very year of the death of the sister, the superior, Mère Anne Théodore Nogaret, remitted these Memoirs to a pious man, who was commissioned to write the life of the sister. This *Life*, however, did not appear till thirty years afterwards, and it contains only a few fragments of the writings of the sister. After this publication the writings were restored to the monastery, but in 1792, during the revolutionary disturbances, the sister who had the charge of them, seized with fear at the prospect of the domiciliary visits, threw them into the fire. Only a few fragments escaped destruction, and were printed in another *Life* of the sister, published in 1868. These are the fragments, (contained already in the first *Life*,) that we cite from, and have partly transcribed under the general title of *Account of Conscience* of Sœur Anne Madeleine.

The *Spiritual Retreat* of Sœur Anne Madeleine, a writing drawn up by her in early religious life.

*Spiritual Lent*, in preparation for the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, composed about the same time.

Some fragments of the letters of Sœur Anne Madeleine, printed in her life.

## II. *Documents handed over by Order of the Visitation.*

The circular of the Mère Anne Théodore Nogaret, superior of the First Monastery of the Visitation, concerning the death of Sœur Anne Madeleine. It is dated 15th February, 1730.

The Letter of Monseigneur the Bishop of Marseilles, to the respected Sœur Marie Agnes de Gréard, of the First Monastery of the Visitation Sainte Marie de Rouen, concerning Sœur Anne Madeleine de Rémusat, nun of the same Order, who died in the odour of sanctity in the First Monastery of Marseilles. Communicated to the faithful of the diocese of Marseilles for their instruction. It is signed, "Henry, Bishop of Marseilles." This letter is a reply of Monseigneur de Belzunce, addressed to Mère de Gréard, with the design of refuting the calumnies extant concerning Sœur Anne Madeleine de Rémusat, and likewise to throw light upon her virtues.



This letter must be looked upon as a document of the highest importance to our *Life* of the Sister.

The circular of Mère Théodore Elizabeth Duclos, of the Monastery of Marseilles, communicating the preceding episcopal letter to the whole Order of the Visitation. The date of this circular is 28th May, 1732.

The circular of the First Monastery of the Visitation at Marseilles, dated 1st May, 1721, concerning the plague with which this town was then afflicted.

The circular, on the same subject, of the Mère Françoise Benigne Dorlyé de Saint Innocent, dated 1st October, 1723.

Various circulars of the First Monastery of the Visitation at Marseilles, giving in abridgment the lives and virtues of the nuns of the Monastery, who were contemporaries of Sœur Anne Madeleine. These, as well as the preceding circulars, have been communicated to us by the Visitation of Marseilles.

### III. *Works relating to the life of the Sœur de Rémusat.*

The *Life of the venerated Sœur Anne Madeleine de Rémusat*, nun of the Visitation Sainte Marie, who died in the odour of sanctity, in the First

Monastery of Marseilles. J. A. Brebion, Marseilles, MDCCLX. This Life is unfortunately very incomplete. It contains fragments of the *Account of Conscience*, as above mentioned. The author, whose name is unknown to us, seems to have feared to bring forward celestial favours and miraculous facts, which might provoke the ridicule of the incredulous. This fear made him hesitate for thirty years before he published his work, and was considerably detrimental to its composition. It throws no light at all upon the mission of Sœur Anne Madeleine. It was communicated to the Order of the Visitation by Mère Marie Charlotte Billon, in a circular dated 12th August, 1760. This venerable superior had been the intimate friend of Sœur Anne Madeleine, and survived her forty years.

*Life of the venerated Sœur Anne Madeleine de Rémusat*, deceased 15th February, 1730, in the First Monastery of the Visitation Sainte Marie de Marseilles. Lyons and Paris, Felix Girard, 1868. This Life is but a new edition of the first Life, composed afresh, and augmented by new fragments of the *Account of Conscience*, and by details given by the old sisters of the monastery. It is most useful to the present work, because it contains all that the traditions of the monastery had preserved concerning Sœur de Rémusat. It may be added that this tradition is most trustworthy, for the following reasons: some of the

contemporaries of the sister died at an advanced age, viz. Sœur Anne Victoire de Rémusat lived to 1760, and Mère Billon to 1770. The former was the sister of Sœur Anne Madeleine, the latter her most intimate friend. They must doubtless have been but little satisfied with the first Life published in 1760, and must have recounted to their younger companions the beautiful facts and great virtues of which they had been the eye witnesses. The memory of these things would naturally have been preserved in the monastery with jealous care. Moreover, the First Monastery of the Visitation of Marseilles received among its novices, in 1782, Sœur Agatha Elizabeth de Rémusat, niece of Sœur Anne Madeleine; she was well informed concerning the life of her aunt, and trod in her holy footsteps. During the reign of terror, Sœur Agatha Elizabeth was imprisoned, and barely escaped the guillotine. On her restoration to liberty, and as soon as the times permitted of it, she founded a school, with the help of her uncle, the Grand Vicaire de Rémusat, who had just returned from emigration. The dispersed nuns of the Visitation were some of them then enabled to return to their monastery in the year 1806. Sœur Agatha Elizabeth, who supported them by her credit and her alms, rejoined them only in 1819. She lived till 1837, was three times superior, and left an uneffaceable impression behind her, not alone in her community, but throughout

the town of Marseilles. Hence it seems evident that the tradition which is preserved in the monastery concerning Sœur Anne Madeleine is surrounded with every mark of truth.

In conclusion, we declare that throughout this work we have intended to conform to the decrees of Urban VIII., of 13th March, 1625, and of 5th June, 1631.



# ANNE MADELEINE DE RÉMUSAT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### The First Years.

"Deus providebit sibi victimam holocausti.—God will provide Himself a victim for an holocaust."—*Genes. xxi. 8.*

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has in these days received a new and wonderful extension. No longer merely a private devotion, conducive to the perfection of a few chosen souls, it is now a public worship, from which we may hope much for the salvation of the whole of society. We are eye-witnesses every day to new and tender manifestations of love towards the Heart of the Man-God: and on the 16th June, 1875, the two hundredth anniversary of the great revelation of Paray-le-Monial, we beheld all the faithful children of the Church throughout the entire world, consecrate themselves unanimously to this Divine Heart, in the inspired words enjoined by the illustrious Pontiff Pius IX.

It was but fitting that the blossoming forth of

this beautiful devotion should carry the mind back to those who, by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, were the means of planting it in the midst of the Christian world. This is why the life of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque is now known and admired by all. Pondering over its pages one still hears in fancy the virgin of Paray-le-Monial proclaiming the mercies of the Sacred Heart. So likewise is it, in due proportion, with regard to the other apostles of the Heart of Jesus; with Père de la Colombière, and also the sons of St. Ignatius, and the daughters of St. Francis of Sales, who have so much contributed to the establishment and propagation of the new devotion. Another soul had her share in this admirable history, and after the forgetfulness of more than a century attention is now drawn towards her providential mission, which was truly inferior to none, excepting that of Blessed Margaret Mary herself. Sœur Anne Madeleine de Rémusat, nun in the First Monastery of the Visitation at Marseilles, was, in the first half of the eighteenth century, the ardent apostle of the devotion to the Heart of Jesus Christ. Just as He had chosen her predecessor of Paray-le-Monial, so did our Lord also choose her to be *the victim and apostle of His wounded Heart*. He afterwards made her His messenger to Monseigneur de Belzunce, the Bishop of Marseilles, and *she was the hidden promoter of the consecration of this great town to the*

*Sacred Heart.* This is the privileged soul of whom we are about to speak. We shall endeavour, if possible, to shed a new light upon her mission, in order to glorify the Heart of the Man-God.

The family of Rémusat (or Rémusat according to the orthography of the times) was an ancient and noble family of Provence, long settled at Marseilles, and thoroughly imbued with the characteristics of the Marseillais. This old city, which was founded by the Phœnicians, has, it is well known, always been one of the most prosperous towns of Europe. Admirably situated on the edge of the great interior basin around which seethe the destinies of the human race, it received sooner than the rest of France the two great gifts of civilization with concurrent riches, and the Christian faith. Lazarus, Martha and Mary, are said by tradition to have landed on its shores, and certainly it may be said that the lively faith and ardent charity of the Marseillais must have been a legacy of that family of Bethany, whom our Lord so loved. Open towards Rome, Marseilles receives in all its purity the first breath of Catholicity, whilst innumerable vessels bring to its shores the treasures of all lands.

Once settled in this town the Rémusats gave themselves up to maritime commerce,\* following the example of the Monteliens, Candoles, and

\* See Borel d'Hauterive, *Annuaire de la Noblesse de France* de 1847, et de 1884, *Articles Rémusat*.



many other families of chivalric or feudal origin, who, far from fearing to lower themselves, were on the contrary, proud of this profession.\* They acquired therein a very good position and great riches. They even became illustrious through their alliances with the first families of the city, and their tenure, at different epochs, of high municipal posts. They were, moreover, most sincere Christians, and the sentiments of honour and probity were hereditary in the family.†

Anne Madeleine was born at Marseilles on the 30th of November, 1696. Her parents, Hyacinthe de Rémusat, the head of an important house of business, and Madame Rémusat, *née* Anne Constant, had already six children, of whom five were sons. The new comer was baptised on the very day of her birth, at the church of Notre Dame des Accoules, and was called Madeleine, which was a favourite name at Marseilles.

Her parents spared no care in order to bring her up well. Although he was engaged in most important commercial affairs, M. de Rémusat considered it his first duty and most precious occupation to preside over the education of his

\* See A. Fabre, *Histoire de Marseille*, liv. Ste. Marohetti, *Discours sur le négoce des gentilshommes de Marseille*. King Charles IX., in letters patent, of 1566, declared that the families of the nobles could engage in commerce without fear of derogation.

\* *Vie de la Venerable Sœur Anne Madeleine de Rémusat*, chap. i.

children, and to form their minds and hearts. He was ably seconded by Madame de Rémusat. She was one of those diligent women who, according to the Holy Ghost, are the crown of their husbands.\* She loved her children, not only tenderly, but as a Christian mother should love, viz. with a mingled discernment, firmness, and gentleness. She knew also how to make herself beloved by them in return.

From her tenderest infancy Madeleine appeared highly gifted; but all her natural advantages were marred by a too excessive vivacity. This defect was soon corrected by means of her strength of will, which enabled her to learn early the lesson of self-restraint, and her chief characteristic thenceforward became that of the most amiable piety.

The love of the angelical virtue was with her a gift of her earliest years, as appeared from her extreme delicacy of conscience, and the horror that she showed for anything that appeared to her in the least contrary to decency. The impulse of grace even urged her to reject caresses, for which she always showed an insurmountable repugnance. This was at first a cause of diversion to those about her, but afterwards her feelings on the matter were respected, when they were discovered to be so serious and so deep. Thus did the Holy Spirit early infuse into this candid soul a

\* Prov. xii. 4.

mysterious attraction towards penance and Christian austeriety.

He taught her also, by the interior movements of grace, even in the earliest dawn of reason, that the true happiness of the creature consists in giving itself to God. Madeleine had in a manner the instinct of the cloister, and almost as soon as she could speak she expressed her desire to enter it. But the enemy of all good prowled about her, and discovering her weak point, he attacked her through her vanity. The resistance was but feeble, and soon the daughter of M. de Rémusat became passionately fond of dress and ornaments. This was one of the greatest dangers to her soul. To how many has it not been the cause of their losing many precious graces! How many young souls, called to a supernatural life, and filled by the Holy Spirit with early longings for the religious life, and with His choicest and most elevated graces, have lost their high vocation through their inordinate love of dress and pleasure! Led astray by vanity, they have ceased to listen to the sweet interior voice that called them to leave all for God, and He, in punishment for their unfaithfulness, has withdrawn Himself from them.

Happily it was not thus for Madeleine. She did not understand how reprehensible was this love of vanity, but the Divine Master wearied not of waiting. A bright light shone into her soul, and at once she understood all. From that

moment she conceived a profound contempt for the world, and made a resolution to leave it. She was only eight years old when this grace was granted her.

Having formed her design, she kept it secret, because she knew that the time was not come for its execution. But one day she learnt that there were religious communities where children of her years were received, and aggregated to a Third Order, whose habit they wore until they were of age to bind themselves irrevocably by vows of religion. At this news she was transported with joy, and, unable to moderate her ardour, she went at once to her parents, and begged their permission to consecrate herself to God in a monastery of Poor Clares.

The astonishment of M. and Madame de Rémusat may be imagined. How indeed could they have suspected that their daughter, at her tender age, had been so enlightened and influenced by grace? Treating her request as the caprice of a child, they endeavoured to satisfy her with vague promises. But Madeleine never forgot these promises. She often recalled them: often did she speak of the happiness of a soul who has consecrated itself to God. The supernatural life that was growing so rapidly within her soul shone with such extraordinary brilliancy that her parents at length understood that the Holy Ghost had special designs in her regard, and fearing to resist

the Will of God, they resolved to grant the favour so ardently desired. As they had a relation in the Second Monastery of the Visitation at Marseilles, they gave the preference to this house, and made arrangements with the superior for the reception of their daughter.\*

On the day fixed they told Madeleine that she was going to the convent. At these words the child trembled with joy, and in the first transport of her gratitude she embraced her father and mother. M. and Madame de Rémusat could not refrain from tears, but rising already above nature, Madeleine sweetly comforted them, and begged of them not to delay her happiness. They took her therefore at once to the monastery. On the way her joy increased, and reached its height when she set foot on the threshold. What was this delicious feeling with which her soul was thus flooded? It was the good odour of Christ, with which the earth was filled, says St. Ambrose, speaking of the Incarnation, when the Heart of the Heavenly Father breathed forth His Word.†

\* *Vis, etc. loc. cit.* According to the documents furnished by the Visitation, this relation seems to have been the Sister Therese Elizabeth de Rémusat. There had been in the monastery two other sisters of Rémusat, both sisters and cousins of Sister Therese Elizabeth. These were Sister Marie Claire, who died in 1705, aged 18, after twenty-one months of profession, and Sister Therese Chrétienne, who died in 1704, aged 25, after eleven months of profession.

† *De Virginib. lib. iii.*

The first days of school life were sweet to her. She was never wearied of blessing the God who had drawn her from the world, and she promised herself never to cross the threshold of the house of the Lord. Those around her encouraged her to persevere in these good dispositions, but they were careful not to encourage a vocation as yet too uncertain. However, Madeleine, who was placed in the charge of the sister who was mistress of the school, soon distinguished herself in the accomplishment of her duties, and became the model of her companions. These latter observed her closely, and often with jealous eyes, but they were unable to find any fault, nor could they refrain from admiring her.

About this time happened an incident which it is necessary to relate, because God made use of it in the accomplishment of His designs. Like most young girls of her rank, Madeleine excelled in needlework, and especially in embroidery. She had one day the misfortune to take away a skein of silk, which belonged to her, but which her mistress had set aside to be used later. To this slight fault she added another more considerable, by denying twice that she had taken the silk. At that moment the bell rang for supper, and Madeleine hastened from the room of her mistress towards the refectory. Whilst passing through a corridor, her attention was arrested by a picture that she had seen a hundred times before without

taking much notice of it. It was the treachery of Judas, and these words were inscribed beneath: "He who wishes to betray Me has only to make use of a lie." Instantly she was conscience-stricken, and, forgetful of supper or recreation, she ran to the chapel, and there, prostrate on the ground, shed torrents of tears. Here God was awaiting her; and while she was thus imploring His pardon, the Divine Master appeared to her bearing His cross. He bent upon her a look full of indignation and of tenderness, and said to her: "It is thou, My daughter, who hast reduced Me to this state." These words pierced her very heart, like an arrow of fire. Whilst grief and love contended within her she was ravished into extasy, and remained long absorbed in the God who attracted her so powerfully. At length, coming to herself, she hastened to her mistress and avowed her fault. In a voice choked with sobs she begged for chastisement. So great was her emotion that they were obliged to soothe the poor penitent, and, instead of punishing, to comfort and encourage her.\*

All who have any experience of the ways of God with souls will have noted the importance of the grace He had here granted to this humble child. It was but the forerunner of still more signal graces. The Divine Master never begins to purify a soul thus early, and in so miraculous a

\* Vie, etc. c. 2.

manner, save with the design to bring it within the radiance of His own mysterious light, for the purpose of contracting with it a most close union, and of making use of it as an extraordinary instrument of His providence. Moreover, the grace that we have just related would seem at once, and in a visible manner, to have borne the fruit that God had in view, for the time was hastened for the First Communion of Madeleine.

It is easy to conceive the ardour with which she prepared for the reception of the greatest of the Sacraments. Favoured with the vision of Jesus, what a high idea must she not have formed of the Eucharistic Bread which communicates Him to our souls! And so the thought of Communion absorbed her entirely. It was her waking thought; it reigned in her mind throughout the day; and even during the night it lingered in the intervals of sleep. She never wearied of hearing the Sacrament of Love spoken of, and she faltered not in the pious practices and mortifications that formed part of the preparation. All the time that she could spare from her occupations was passed before the Blessed Sacrament, where she poured out her heart before the Heart of Jesus. There it was that she received the gift of tears. O precious gift! O eminent grace! for each tear comes from the heart, and is caused by the fervour of the desire. An infinite God can only be glorified by an infinite offering, and it has been said that



tears are infinite because of the infinite desires of the soul.\* Do we not see this in Madeleine, when, in answer to the inquiries of her mistress she says: "Is it possible that you can ask me what is the matter, as if you were in ignorance? Do you not know that I shall soon have the happiness to receive my God? I cannot think of it without shedding floods of tears."

At length the day of the First Communion dawned. There is always something ineffable and touching in this first meeting of the King of Glory with a child. The angels of heaven assist with admiration at this sweet interview. But how much more sublime is the spectacle when the soul has been prepared by extraordinary gifts! As the high Thrones lower their wings under the feet of God, so does the soul bow down its powers under the feet of Jesus. Jesus gives Himself to the soul, and the soul gives itself to Jesus, and the promise of an eternal love is exchanged. Happy soul that tastes thus for the first time the delights of a divine repast; henceforward it will aspire only to please the august Guest who thus visits it, and so to merit the communion of eternity!

Did this take place in the soul of Madeleine at the hour of her First Communion? We know not; for she confided to none the secret of the mysterious operations of her Spouse: but her

\* Cathar. Senen. Dial. xcii.

angelic appearance, her eyes bathed in tears, and her inflamed countenance showed that something great was passing within her.

Moreover, the effects that followed testified to the importance of the grace received. A total change came over her. The last vestiges of her vivacity, and of her natural eagerness for external objects, even her taste for frivolities, disappeared altogether. Precious virtues budded forth: unceasing vigilance, perfect regularity, prompt docility and obedience excited the admiration of the community. But what charmed them above all was her high gift of prayer. The eye of her mind was ever fixed on God, and beyond visible objects Madeleine seemed to behold an Object invisible to others, the God whom she loved with her whole soul. This was her usual aspect amidst her companions, whether taking part in their conversations, or through obedience applying herself to external works. But no sooner was the time over that was allotted by the rule for exterior occupations than Madeleine was again absorbed by the influence of grace, and, giving herself up without restraint to her resistless attraction for prayer, she remained motionless and entranced. These were the beginnings, when she tasted the ineffable sweetness of contemplation; Jesus drew her by His consolations, and the fire of His love inflamed her very countenance, and shed a halo of sanctity around her person.

But it was deemed advisable to put her spirit of prayer to the test. Very often the voice of obedience called her from prayer under pretext of employing her in external occupations. She obeyed with alacrity, notwithstanding her pain; but she endeavoured to make up for the lost time by infringing on the hours of recreation. For this her mistress wisely reprov'd her, assuring her that nothing was so opposed to the spirit of S. Francis of Sales as singularity of conduct, and that if she wished to be numbered one day among his daughters, she must accustom herself to the common life, and prefer the merit of obedience to the most holy actions of her own choosing. This admonition produced upon her an ineffaceable impression, and thenceforward she exercised herself constantly in this kind of sacrifice, which is most difficult and most repugnant to self-love and to nature.

Her obedience became perfect, and the historian of her life cites more than one instance in proof that it often attained a high degree of perfection. To put some limit to her thirst for privations, she was ordered to eat everything that should be placed before her. It happened one day by mistake that fruit, some of which was rotten, was put upon the plate of Mademoiselle de Rémusat. Remembering the order of her mistress, and without a moment's hesitation, she eat it all up indiscriminately. This drew upon her the ridicule of

her companions ; but the dear child kept silence, and offered her confusion secretly to God, esteeming herself but too happy to thus partake in the humiliations of her Divine Master.

In order to try her virtue, Providence permitted this incident, which they did not appreciate, to entirely change the opinion of the other pupils. They now looked upon Mademoiselle de Rémusat with the utmost disdain ; they misinterpreted all her words and acts, and loaded her with insults. She had now become the object of antipathy and contempt, from having been the favourite of all her companions. This is unfortunately often the case in educational houses. It sufficed that Madeleine should appear among her companions to be at once assailed with a storm of abuse. Her virtue stood firm amidst these tempests. The gentle young girl understood all, and while keenly feeling the insults, she raised her soul to God, and did not permit her countenance to betray her sufferings. She made no complaint to her mistress, although one word from her would have ended these painful scenes. Far from avoiding humiliation, she clung to it, and loved it supernaturally. Moreover, it was owing to her intercession that the contrivers of these insults escaped the punishment that awaited them.

In this way did grace form this tender soul, and prepare it for its glorious mission. Until now the preparation had been but distant ; but now the

action of God took a wider range, the Divine Master pronounced the word that was to decide her whole life.

Her prayer became more intimate. Madeleine received heavenly favours, penetrating lights in her understanding, sweet ardours in her will. Their effect was to unite her more closely to her Divine Master, and to make her desire His presence more fervently. Her spiritual hunger for Holy Communion became excessive, and she suffered a kind of agony during the intervals between the Communions that were allowed her on Sundays and feast days. At the same time she felt that our Lord became more pressing, and an internal voice made her understand the Divine exactions. But the light was not as yet complete. She begged her Divine Master to make known to her His will, promising to undertake and to suffer anything in its accomplishment. At length dawned the 2nd of July, the feast of the Visitation. Madeleine went to Communion, and after Communion, as she reiterated her supplications, she heard in her heart Jesus speaking to her thus: "I will that thou shouldst be faithful to Me." At the same time a sudden light came upon her, and showed her a part of the designs of God in her regard. She understood that until then she had done nothing but receive, that now it was time to give, and that the fidelity that was exacted from her would consist in putting to

death nature and self-love. Armed with a divine courage, from that hour she declared an uncompromising war against herself. Henceforward we shall see Madeleine renouncing everything, seeking after those things that she loathes, and depriving herself of things that she likes.

Feeling one day a horror for certain insects, this repugnance seemed to her a delicacy that must be overcome at any cost, and convinced that God asked the sacrifice of her, she took a considerable number of the insects and eat them, without showing any external mark of her disgust. On another occasion, finding a vase full of the blood and remains of these same insects, an impulse of grace made her put it to her lips and drain it to the dregs, before her mistress, who perceived it too late, could stop her.

Meditating one day on the Crowning with Thorns, she was seized with a sudden longing to suffer something of the same kind in imitation of her Saviour: taking a long thick pin, which fastened her veil, she drove it into her head with sufficient force to make a deep wound.\*

Thus was she prepared for the designs of Providence. The time had now come when she was to hear the great word that would give a distinctive character to her whole life. The Divine Saviour

\* !*Vie*, etc. c. ii. See also the *Circulaire du premier Monastere de la Visitation de Marseille* of 15th February, 1730.

drew near to His little Spouse, and dropping the tone of a master, in which He had hitherto addressed her, He seemed as if He would open His Heart to her, and consult her as one consults a friend: "*My daughter*," He said to her, "*I seek a victim.*"

At this word of *victim* Madeleine felt transported. Her ardour for suffering redoubled; but esteeming herself a thousand times unworthy of such a high destiny, she dared not offer herself. Therefore, repassing in her mind the holiest persons she knew, she proposed the one who seemed to her the most worthy of such a favour. But Jesus replied: "No, that is not the one I seek." With the same simplicity that had induced her to propose the first, she proposed successively a second and a third; but as she always received the same reply, she took refuge at last in a respectful silence, adoring the will of God, and leaving to Him the care of His glory. Jesus; who had only questioned her to try her humility and her love, and to surprise her by a choice that she did not expect, left her no longer in suspense. With an ineffable expression, with the tender condescension that had drawn Him to confide in the zeal of this courageous virgin, He said to her: "It is thyself, My daughter, whom I have chosen for My victim." Having pronounced this solemn word, this word of a lifetime, He disappeared.

This word sank into the soul of Madeleine with

an extraordinary and sudden illumination. She was filled with love and admiration, with tenderness and gratitude. She was penetrated with God, and absorbed into the Heart of her Jesus. When she came to herself, when she had measured her happiness, and had understood that she was to be raised to the dignity of spouse and victim of the Divine Lamb, she humbled herself profoundly; and just as Jesus delivered Himself to His Father for an odour of sweetness,\* so did she make of herself a complete and irrevocable offering.†

When a victim is about to be sacrificed, it is offered according to a certain law, which determines the rite of oblation and the mode of destruction. The different sacrifices of the Old Testament are all only imperfect figures of the one perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They also represent to us the mystical sacrifice of souls who immolate themselves to God in union with the Lamb. In the pages of Leviticus we find the law of sacrifice, which ordains that the victim be entirely consumed by the sacred fire. This is the text: "The victim shall be burned upon the altar, all night until morning; the fire shall be of the same altar."‡ This is our conception of the sacrifice of Madeleine. She will be entirely consumed on the altar of the Heart of

\* Ephes. v. 2.

† Vis, etc. c. ii.

‡ Levit. vi. 9.



Jesus Christ, by the flame of divine love that issues therefrom. She will be thus burned all night until morning, that is to say, during her entire life, and until the dawn of her eternity. Already divine charity was pressing her, and she sighed only after the fire of suffering.

Her first trial was this vehement longing to suffer. It grew until it became a real torment. On the feast of S. Theresa Madeleine complained earnestly to our Lord, and begged Him, by the office of victim with which He had deigned to invest her, to give her at length a share in His cross. She heard then an interior voice, which said: "Thy prayer shall be granted." It was indeed granted, but not for some weeks after, and then in a way which she was far from expecting. On the feast of S. Francis Xavier she was visited with an intense desolation; God seemed to have abandoned her. He withdrew from her all His sensible favours: the gift of tears, the fervour that made everything easy, the divine delights of prayer, the illuminations of her understanding, the sacred transports of her heart; in fine, even the sweet interior peace which made her soul like to a sheet of calm water that is gently caressed and penetrated by the rays of the sun. All was taken from her in a single moment. In exchange she felt only dryness, weariness, and repugnances. Thick darkness enveloped her mind; her heart was crushed by fear, and dried up by grief. The

tabernacle was mute for her, and God seemed to be no longer a friend, but an irritated judge. In fine, on whichever side she turned she met with nothing but desolation.

This was the moment that Satan had chosen wherein to attack Madeleine. He represented to her that until that day she had been the victim of illusions; that she had done nothing but irritate heaven; and that the only way to put an end to her disorders was to end her life. The tempter succeeded in persuading her that the interests and glory of God demanded this sacrifice, and that it was not surprising that a child of sixteen should be incapable of resisting such artifices. But God watched over her, and He put a nun in her way, who, detecting the stratagem of the devil, saved her from an act of despair, and tried by gentle words to calm her trouble.

The pain, however, continued; and the combat grew in intensity. The character of Madeleine also grew in these struggles, which called for all her courage. She attained even to heroism, for her fidelity was dauntless, her vigilance admirable, and she fulfilled with the most perfect regularity duties for which she no longer experienced anything but violent disgust. Thus it was that, though in her own estimation she no longer loved God, she loved Him in the purest manner, and glorified Him in the way most worthy of Him. By so doing she inflicted upon the tempter a more

shameful defeat ; for the most shameful defeat the devil can sustain is from a soul that is apparently abandoned by God, and weaned from all spiritual consolation.

Undoubtedly the road along which God led His faithful servant was painful and bristling with difficulties ; she could not pursue it without the assistance and direction of a guide who should be at once learned and capable. This help the poor child could not find in the ordinary confessor of the monastery. She spoke of it to her mistress, who appears to have been her own aunt, Sister Thérèse Elizabeth de Remusat.\* Sœur Thérèse Elizabeth willingly undertook to procure for her niece as director a religious of the Society of Jesus, who was in all probability the Père Milley. In so doing she acted conformably to the spirit of S. Francis de Sales. That eminent director of consciences had always upheld the necessity of a guide in the spiritual life ;† and in conformity with the spirit of the Church he had strongly recommended that in the choice of a confessor souls should be allowed that right and holy liberty which renders the yoke of the Lord sweet and light.‡ Madeleine made use then of a sacred

\* According to the documents preserved in the archives of the Second Monastery of the Visitation, Sœur Thérèse Elizabeth died on 23rd August, 1729, aged 39 years, and 21 years professed.

† *Introduction to a Devout Life*, First Part, c. 4.

‡ Spirit of S. Francis of Sales, xvii. 15.

and unassailable right in asking for a guide who should be capable of supporting her in her interior combat; likewise her prudent mistress fulfilled a duty when she made known to the Superior of the Monastery the wishes of her pupil. But unhappily the Superior was very much opposed to the project, and Madeleine was disappointed in her hope.\*

At this distance of time it is difficult to judge of the conduct of the worthy Superior. Nevertheless when, in connection with this last incident, we consider the events of supernatural character that we have already related, we are induced to believe that God, for a purpose which we shall presently mention, had veiled the soul of Madeleine in the eyes of all the superiors of the monastery, excepting perhaps the mistress of the school. How otherwise could it be that nuns formed in the school of the Visitation, and acquainted with supernatural ways, could possibly have failed to understand the significance of the apparition of our Lord bearing His cross, related by so candid a child as Madeleine, and accompanied by such extraordinary proofs of the absence of illusion, and of the truth of her affirmations? And if they admitted this fact, how was it that they did not at once infer that Providence was forming that soul for great things, and that consequently He was leading it in the high-

\* *Vis, etc. c. iii.*

est paths, wherein an enlightened guide was indispensable? However this was, we have no doubt concerning the providential design of God over this soul: the Divine Master had resolved to place elsewhere her who was to glorify His Heart, and hence He permitted this opposition to her wishes.

Madeleine submitted respectfully to the decision of her superior, but feeling that it would be impossible for her to maintain herself in her state of trial without some external help, she resolved to return for a time to her father's house, in order to place herself under the direction of the guide whom God intended for her. She was not long in carrying out this resolution, which depicts so well the firmness of her character and the uprightness of her judgment. M. de Rémusat coming to the monastery a few days afterwards, Madeleine told him of her wish. He did not wait to be entreated, but took his daughter away at once. Thus did she leave the holy enclosure of the Second Monastery of the Visitation, which she never saw again.\*

\* *Vie*, etc. c. ii.

## CHAPTER II.

## Religious Vocation.

"Quid enim mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? Defecit caro mea, et cor meum: Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum.—For what have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away: Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever."  
—*Psalm lxxii. 25, 26.*

When Madeleine returned home she was still a child of only thirteen years. According to her biographer, she was rather under the usual height, and she stooped a little, which betokened a delicate constitution. Her features were not remarkable; but the outward reflection of her beautiful soul gave her a distinguished appearance. Already upon her brow she bore the marks of her interior conflicts, but her glance was none the less serene, and her manners were gracious and affable.

As to her intellectual qualities, they seem to have been far beyond those that are usually seen at her age. She was gifted with a lively imagination and a penetrating mind. Her memory was

excellent, and likewise her powers of judgment, which already had been put to the test. When she spoke of God, her heart, on fire with divine love, overflowed upon her lips, and her burning words moved the hearts of those who heard her. Added to this she had learnt to forget herself, so that when in contact with others she sympathised with them and quickly gained their confidence.\*

This accomplished young girl was eagerly welcomed home; and the affection which was lavished on her grew in intensity as time revealed the precious qualities that education had developed, and the fragrant virtues in her soul that grace had fructified. Great endeavours were made to attract her to the world. Remembering her old fondness for dress, her parents now offered her fresh adornments for her entry into society. But she declined their offers, and taking advantage of their anxiety to please her, she asked that she might be left entirely to herself for some time, with full liberty to follow her religious exercises. This was at once accorded to her, without any explanation. No one indeed could have suspected her of any leanings towards the religious state, from which she seemed to have voluntarily withdrawn.

The first use which she made of her liberty was to seek out the man of God whom she wished to have for her guide and confessor. The Reverend

\* *Vie etc.* c. iii.

Father Milley was a religious of the Company of Jesus, of tried virtue, and of great experience in the conduct of souls. God had reserved for him the glory of directing her who was about to become the apostle of the Sacred Heart at Marseilles; just as He had once reserved to Perè de la Colombière the honour of assisting Blessed Margaret Mary with his lights. We draw attention to these two facts, because they bear witness to the providential design which united the Company of Jesus and the Order of the Visitation, in view of the great work of the propagation of the new devotion.

Madeleine now placed herself under the direction of this enlightened master in the ways of God. She opened her whole soul to him, and rendered him an exact account of the operations of grace within her. In the successive interviews that he had with her in the sacred tribunal, Father Milley taught his penitent how to bear herself in time of trial. In order to enable her to triumph over the dryness and disgust which overwhelmed her in prayer, he counselled her to prolong the time. But that nature might not be too much oppressed, he was careful to set aside a portion of each of her days for such recreations as were conformable to piety. Day by day then found Mademoiselle de Rémusat visiting the churches, serving the sick in the hospitals, consoling the afflicted, and relieving the poor. This



conduct produced a twofold effect. In the first place the much tried child was thus enabled to surmount the oppression of her mind. She gained the public esteem, and even veneration; and her example edified the society of Marseilles. The churches she frequented were preferred; it was considered a precious favour to hear her speak of heaven, and many souls, in contemplating her, became better, and gave themselves openly to a life of piety. God, whose ways are admirable, gave His servant the empire of hearts, in order that she might one day use them for the glorification of the Heart of Jesus.

Nevertheless, it was not the world, any more than the Second Monastery of the Visitation, that Providence had chosen to be the scene of the life and mission of Madeleine. He destined her for another sphere, and this was the question she sought now to solve. She was faithful to the voice of grace, and to the voice of her director, and God gave the latter sufficient light to decide upon this important and fundamental step in the designs of His Providence.

Father Milley was inspired to indicate to his spiritual daughter the First Monastery of the Visitation at Marseilles. The choice of this Order was justified by the attraction felt by Madeleine for the life of the Visitandines, as also by her title of Victim of the Sacred Heart. This particular religious house was chosen for two reasons: there

were in the First Monastery of the Visitation no souls (as in the Second Monastery) with whom Madeleine was already linked in ties of friendship; this rendered her sacrifice more perfect. The spirit of S. Francis de Sales reigned throughout the house, and the superior was one of the holiest and most capable in the whole Order. Here also the devotion to the Adorable Heart of Jesus Christ had taken early root. The wise director made Madeleine present herself at the monastery, and he forbore from preparing the way for her, in order to humiliate her and give her an opportunity of gaining greater merit.

She presented herself, then, in the parlour, as obedience enjoined. Her modest air charmed the superior and the nuns who received her; her conversation filled them with admiration; and when they heard her name, so renowned throughout Marseilles, their joy was complete. To a sister who interrogates her she replies only: "How good is God, madame!" But these brief words were said with such fervour that it was evident to the nuns that the supernatural life had taken entire possession of this young girl of fifteen, and had raised her far above the ordinary young persons of her age. The superior therefore promised the new postulant that she would consult God in prayer, and told her to come again.

In the second visit Madeleine was examined by the counsellors, according to the usages of the

Order. They were unanimous in her favour. But as the postulant had not the consent of her family, and feared indeed that she would never obtain it, the Mère Nogaret, superior of the monastery, decided upon consulting Monseigneur de Belzunce, Bishop of Marseilles.

The illustrious prelate had a great affection for the First Monastery, and he particularly esteemed Mère Nogaret. On her side she venerated Monseigneur de Belzunce like a father, and in important circumstances had recourse to his enlightened judgment with the utmost confidence. She easily prevailed upon him to examine thoroughly the vocation of Mademoiselle de Rémusat, whose family, moreover, were dear to him. Madeleine made known to him all the favours that God had granted her, and also the secret dispositions of her heart. The angel of the Church of Marseilles, who had such deep love for souls, and such great light to govern them, soon recognized in Madeleine a chosen soul on whom God had particular and even sublime designs. He also affirmed the certainty of her vocation, and enjoined her to respond without delay to the call of the Lord. From that day he became the spiritual father and intimate confidant of the humble Madeleine, and gave her an unfailing and most touching affection.\*

Some little time after these interviews of the

\* *Vie, etc. c. 4; Letter of Mgr. de Belzunce to Mère de Gréard, of 10th May, 1732.*

bishop with his spiritual daughter, on the 2nd of October, 1711, the day on which the Church keeps the feast of the holy guardian angels, Made-moiselle de Rémusat rose early and quitted her father's house without telling her family. She made her way to the monastery, and on crossing the sacred threshold could not contain her delight. The venerable nuns who received her were equally overjoyed: the superior blessed her and pressed her to her heart; the novices embraced her tenderly; all were eager to show their affection for her. For it is good, it is pleasant, for sisters to dwell together within the sacred precincts,\* and to compass the altar of the living God; to hear the voice of praise, and tell of all His wondrous works.† It was, then, with good reason that this family of religious, so dear to the Heart of Jesus, blessed and thanked Him for the new voice that was now to be added to their sacred choir.

Different were the feelings that prevailed in the house of M. de Rémusat. When the departure of Madeleine was discovered her parents were for a time completely distracted. They both hurried to the monastery, and, sending for their daughter, overwhelmed her with reproaches and lamentations. Madeleine, armed with heavenly strength, stood calm and serene amidst the storm. Neither the bitter reproaches, nor the tender solicitations,

\* Psalm cxxxii. 1.

† Psalm xxv. 6, 7.

nor even the tears of her parents, could shake her resolution. At length she spoke in her turn, and at her voice peace returned to these troubled souls. So well did she plead her holy cause, that at length M. and Madame de Rémusat gave in; divine love once more resumed its sway over their hearts, and filled with admiration at the generosity of their daughter, they made their sacrifice.\*

The gates of the cloister were now closed upon Mademoiselle de Rémusat, and the pious postulant was put in possession of her happiness. The Lord became the portion of her inheritance and her cup.† She entered the ranks of those religious souls prefigured by the Nazarenes of the ancient law, those souls crowned and consecrated, whom God has promised to make whiter than snow, and whom, by an ever recurring victory of His grace, and in all their youth and beauty and promise, in each succeeding generation He withdraws from the midst of the world.‡ This is the perpetual triumph of Jesus Christ; this is the happiness to which a soul will be raised who has abandoned all things in order to give herself to the heavenly King; deprived of earthly adornments, her brow shall be crowned with a halo of immortality. This was well understood by our gentle child, and radiant with pure joy she

\* *Vie*, etc. c. 4.

† Psalm xv. 5.

‡ Num. vi. 18, 21; Judges xiii. 5, 7, and xvi. 17; Thren. iv. 7; Amos ii. 11.

thought only of thanking God, and of rendering herself worthy of His call.

Let us now glance at her new home. History tells us that the First Monastery of the Visitation at Marseilles was a most exemplary house then, as it is now. Mgr. de Belzunce said in one of his canonical visits that it seemed to be the abode of the God of peace;\* and in a letter later on, addressed to the Visitation, he spoke of the great esteem in which it was held at Marseilles. He added that peace, fervour, union, regularity, in fine, the true spirit of S. Francis of Sales, had reigned there without intermission; that in every sense it was the good odour of Jesus Christ.†

At the time of which we speak there were still some sisters in the monastery who had been formed in the school of the first mothers. The superiors were souls of rare merit and eminent piety. The noviciate was fervent; the novices were taught to practise the virtues proper to religious, with that noble meekness and sweetness that is so characteristic of the daughters of S. Francis de Sales, and that tends so powerfully to make virtue attractive.‡

At that time the direction of the monastery was, as we have already said, in the hands of Mère Anne Theodore Nogaret. She came of an

\* *Vie*, etc. c. 4.

† *Letter to Mère de Gréard*, 10th May, 1732.

‡ *Vie*, etc. c. 4.

honourable and Christian family of Languedoc, who had settled at Marseilles. She entered the noviciate at the age of fifteen, and underwent severe trials, both interior and exterior, which prepared her for her great mission. Her humility was most profound, and she possessed the gift of prayer in a high degree. She was once heard to say, that were she shut up for life in a dark prison, she would know no weariness, but would find sufficient interior occupation in unceasingly loving and adoring the sovereign greatness of God. It would be impossible to speak too highly of her spirit of mortification, her perfect observance of the rule, and her tender charity. From the depths of His tabernacle Jesus had told her in a few distinct words that prayer and almsgiving would be the mainstay of the religious house confided to her care, and she was faithful to her call. She fulfilled successively the first charges of the monastery. As superior she showed wonderful wisdom, and very elevated views in the government of her exemplary community ; in the direction of souls she gave proof of extraordinary illumination, especially with regard to the direction of Sœur de Rémusat, for which indeed she would seem to have been prepared by the Sacred Heart itself. Her munificence shone in the execution of the reredos of the altar of the church in the monastery, which was made of precious Italian marbles. Her influence was considerable, even outside the

cloister, and it may be said to have been productive of happy results, especially for the repression of Jansenism. It is not, therefore, surprising that Mère de Nogaret had such an extraordinary reputation, hidden only from herself through her great humility. She was deeply venerated by the Bishop of Marseilles, the Archbishop of Aix, the Jesuits of Provence, and by the Countess de Grignan, granddaughter of S. Chantal, and wife of the lieutenant general of the king. Whilst the father general of the Company of Jesus affiliated spiritually his monastery to this holy and illustrious society, the missionaries of Maduré blessed from afar her generous hand. Mère Anne Théodore Nogaret was one of the most beautiful souls in the Visitation, and one of the most enlightened and holiest of its superiors.\*

Beside this noble soul let us place another, not less beautiful. Mère Anne Augustine Gravier belonged to a family rich both in virtue and in worldly goods. She left the paternal mansion under the inspiration of grace, and took refuge in the monastery. Her soul was purified by physical sufferings and by mental trials, and the Holy

\* She died at an advanced age in 1731, after twenty-one years of superiority. See *les Circulaires de la Visitation de Marseilles*, of 4th July, 1728, and of 2nd May, 1731; the abridgment of her life and virtues written at the same time; also a letter addressed to the monastery, dated 5th June, 1731.



Spirit adorned it with a deep humility, a tender and generous love for God, and a firm and undaunted spirit. She had the signal honour of introducing into the monastery the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and she triumphed with admirable courage over the strong opposition that this amiable devotion met with at first in most of the houses of the Order. It is to her that is due the establishment of an oratory in the interior of the cloister dedicated to the Divine Heart. Together with her sister, Anne Aimée Gravier, she promoted the building of the chapel of the Sacred Heart in the monastery church. In consequence of her virtues and lights, and of her religious spirit, she was chosen to fill successively the offices of superior and of mistress of novices. She has left behind her an ineffaceable recollection of the admirable way in which she discharged these functions.\* How beautiful are the ways of God! Mère Nogaret and Mère Gravier, both lovers of the Sacred Heart, both filled with the spirit of S. Francis of Sales and S. Chantal, both distinguished in their Order for their burning zeal and consummate wisdom, are chosen by Providence to watch over the pure and gracious soul to whom such a high destiny seems promised. Whilst they are forming her, God prepares afar, in the holy fountain head of

\* *Circulaire* of 19th May, 1713. It was in this year that Mère Gravier died.

the Visitation, another maternal soul, Françoise Benignè d'Orlyé, professed nun at Annecy, who will be raised up when the hour comes, and will be brought to Madeleine. To her will be confided the government of the monastery in the most critical moments; and she will also direct Sœur de Rémusat when she reaches the summit of her career.\*

During the life of Sœur de Rémusat there will be other souls, pure and elevated, and filled with the spirit of God, who will revolve around these great souls, like to brilliant stars in the heaven of the religious life. Such for instance, Mère Marie Charlotte Billon, that soul so fervent and so mortified, so obedient and charitable, always serene, always equal to herself, and that not only in spiritual trials, but also in physical sufferings and in exterior contradictions. Abhorring the religious state, she was nevertheless drawn to it by a sudden and miraculous grace. She entered the monastery some time before Sœur Anne Madeleine, and they were soon attracted by a mutual sympathy. Later on we shall see these two souls linked together in the holiest and most supernatural ties, under the eye of their superiors and by the inspiration of grace. We shall see them full of respect one for the other, confiding to one another their most intimate secrets, and holding sweet converse, from

\* This professed of Annecy lived nine years at Marseilles. See the *Circulaire* of 4th July, 1728.

whence they issued forth like seraphs, on fire with the love of God. Mère de Billon, surviving her angelic friend for many long years, kept her memory with jealous affection, and left it as a precious legacy to the whole Institute. Mère de Billon was one of the holiest superiors of the Monastery of Marseilles.\*

Also most worthy of notice is Anne Victoire de Rémusat, the eldest sister of the pious novice, and her most precious conquest. Called to the religious life, but tempted to resist grace through her excessive tenderness for her family, the prayers and example of her younger sister obtained for her strength to tear herself away from the arms of her mother, in order to correspond with the call of God. Her sacrifice once made, she edified first the noviciate, and then the whole monastery, by her fervour and regularity, her spirit of prayer, her zeal in the accomplishment of her different duties, and her industrious charity, when infirmarian, towards the sick. In a word, she was worthy of her sister.†

Among these fervent novices, this community

\* *Abrégé de la Vie et des Vertus de la Mère Billon.* Mère Billon died on the 26th of March, 1770. She it was who had the *Life of Anne Madeleine* published; she gave it to the Order of the Visitation in her *Circulaire* of 12th August, 1760.

† She died at the age of sixty-five years, on the 12th of August, 1760. See the *Circulaire* of that time referring to her.

of proved virtue, there were many souls who, by their prayers and actions, conduced greatly to the perfection of Sœur de Remusat; many also there were who were influenced by her holiness. We will mention first the young sister Anne Cécile Olivier, who often witnessed the supernatural languors and the loving sighs of her virtuous companion. The seraphic sister Anne Elizabeth Truilhard was told by Sœur de Rémusat (enlightened from on high), that Jesus had chosen her to be the perpetual adorer of His Heart. Sœur Catherine Marie Saint Jacques, a retired and silent soul, was favoured with heavenly delights and lost in the contemplation of the splendours of the Divinity. She was discovered on one occasion ravished into ecstasy and prostrate for three hours with her face on the ground, and her arms in the form of a cross. Another time she passed the whole night of Maundy Thursday motionless on her knees: burning with zeal, she vowed never to do or to say anything that was not for the glory of God or the satisfaction of obedience or charity. Before her death she was tried by the most fearful sufferings, and purified by the most refined interior martyrdom.

The angelic Sister Thérèse Marie Pautrier was offered to God before her birth, by her father, who was a saint in the world. Adorned with every qualification to please, she fled from the paternal mansion, and took refuge in the cloister,

where she practised all the religious virtues. Anne Aimée Gravier, sister of the mother of that name, was told by our Lord on the day of her profession that He espoused her on Calvary, and that she would ever bear a crown of thorns on her brow. She was led by rigorous interior ways, and tried by the most fearful temptations; but gifted at the same time with extraordinary graces, she attained to a close union with God. Théodore Elisabeth du Clos had been in the cloister from the age of fourteen. She was trained into an elevated and generous soul, and became one of the greatest superiors of the monastery. Like an adoring angel, she was unceasingly purifying the powers of her soul, and striving after the simplicity that contemplation demands; she remained annihilated, and as it were with folded wings before the face of her God.

To these grand names of the Visitation we will add other chosen souls, who complete the noble and holy company: Sisters Marie Honoré Lieutard, Marie Gertrude Saugey, Françoise Augustine Bonneau, Marie Hélène Cordier, Marie Rosalie Bon, Marie Xavier Sieuve, Marguerite René Lemaire, Marie Gabrielle Nogaret, Marie Cesarée Guilhet, Marie Catherine Pautrier, Marie Elisabeth Marion, Marie Madeleine Seguin, and her sister Marie Marguerite, Jeanne Marie Nogaret, Marguerite Laurence Gravier, Françoise Hyacinthe Lebois, Marie

Joseph Imber, Anne Rose Bonneau, Marie Rose Arène, Marie Isabeau André, Marie Louise Moustier, Anne Colombe Bonneau, and Françoise Cathérine Latil. They were all famous for their spirit of prayer, their love and exact observance of the rule, their generosity in time of trial, and their holy zeal.\* According to the precepts of their holy founder, all their exercises, and their whole life tended to union with God and the salvation of their neighbour, whilst they assisted the Church by their prayers and example. In the gracious words of S. Francis de Sales, they were daughters of good odour, daughters of heavenly conversation.† They all felt the same love, all with one accord lived in Jesus Christ, and in His Mother; and, as in our own days, their cloister exhaled a heavenly fragrance of virtue.

On her entry into the monastery, Mademoiselle de Rémusat was confided to Sœur Anne Augustine Gravier. She was the mistress of novices, and in this capacity she greatly resembled the ancient Mère Greyfié of the Visitation of Paray-le-Monial. She loved her novices tenderly, but she knew that she could not render them a greater service than by trying them in every way. In one glance she read the soul of the new aspirant, and she understood that God had great designs on her. She

\* See the *Circulaires* concerning these sisters, dated 1712 to 1740.

† *Directoire Spirituel*, art. 11.

also consulted Père de Milley concerning the interior dispositions of Mademoiselle de Rémusat, and then with consummate wisdom she drew up her plan of conduct.

This plan consisted in treating the aspirant as if she were most imperfect, most ignorant, and most remiss in the accomplishment of her duties. She did not spare her either public or private reproofs ; she reprimanded her in the most humiliating way ; in fine, neither correction nor penance was omitted that could serve to mortify the mind and destroy self-love. She watched over her closely, and passed over nothing, finding fault even with her virtues, taxing her modesty as timidity, her recollection and exactitude as vain ostentation. In consequence of such treatment Madeleine learned to conquer and mortify herself in all things. Very soon neither reproaches, nor reprimands, nor contempts, were able to draw from her either complaint or murmur, nor even the least token of displeasure. This holy war against nature left her serene, contented, and joyous. She grew to love insults, and to bless those who offered them to her. Her wise mistress did more violence to herself than to her spiritual daughter, for she loved her as one loves a soul that has been given by God, and in place of love she showed her nothing but severity. But Madeleine had already attained to the sense of heavenly things, and her affection, her submission, and her gratitude to her

mistress grew in proportion to the severity with which she was treated.\* Truly admirable was this sympathy between these two souls. The Holy Spirit alone could have inspired and strengthened them to such supernatural intercourse.

\* *Vie*, etc. c. 4.



## CHAPTER III.

## The Novitiate.

"Tunc dixi: Ecce venio. In capite libri scriptum est de me ut facerem voluntatem tuam: Deus meus, volui, et legem tuam in medio cordis mei.—Then said I: Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will: O My God, I have desired it, and Thy law in the midst of My heart.—*Psalm xxxix.* 8, 9.

In the holy Order of the Visitation, when a postulant has been tried for some months, and has given marks of a true vocation, the question of her admission to the clothing is treated of in Chapter. Madeleine de Rémusat had passed three months in these kind of trials, and had just completed her fifteenth year, when the mistress of novices proposed her in Chapter to the community. Their votes were unanimous in her favour. Monseigneur de Belzunce wished to give her the veil himself, and he fixed the ceremony for the 19th January of that year, 1712. Great were the preparations for this beautiful feast: happy Madeleine, in retreat, communed in silence with her God; whilst her family and friends, together with a number of the most distinguished inhabitants of

Marseilles, announced their intention of being present on the day fixed, in the chapel of the monastery.\*

It is indeed beautiful to see a virgin renouncing all the joys of earth, in order to consecrate herself to Jesus Christ. From apostolic times the Church has surrounded this act with ceremonies which testify to the importance she attaches to it, the moral beauty that she discerns therein, and the dignity of the privileged soul. She has crowned the brow of consecrated virgins, sometimes with a band of purple,† sometimes with a crown of flowers,‡ always with a chaste veil.§ To this day is to be seen, engraved on a wall of the catacombs, the ancient rite for the blessing of a virgin;|| and in certain religious communities is heard the ancient chant of the pontiffs of the Church, wherein virgins are called sublime souls, because, sacrificing the lawful and holy espousals

\* *Vie*, etc. c. 5.

† V. Optat. *Adv. Parm.* lib. ii. et vi. ; Cyrill. *Catech.* xii. ; Hier. *Ep. ad Demetriad* ; Euseb. *De Martyr. Palaest.* c. 9, etc. This band was called *mitra*, *mitella*, *pannus* and *flamenseum*.

‡ Pontif. Rom. "*De Benedict. et Consecr. Virg.*"

§ V. Greg. Magn. *Lib. sacram Miss. in Consecrat. Virg.* ; the ancient liturgies cited in Martene, *De Antiq. Eccl. Ritib.* t. iii. lib. ii. c. 6 ; the Epitaphs of the first Christian ages, for instance, that of the translation of Nenesius, *Class.* xx. 122 ; Pontif. Roman. *loc. cit.*, etc.

|| In the Cemetery of Priscilla, on the way of Salara,

of earth, they have understood and loved the mystery which these prefigure.\*

In the Order of the Visitation the ceremonies of clothing and religious profession are not accompanied with much external display, but their signification is none the less deep. In assisting at them, it is felt that these forms, at once sweet and austere, are the lively images of the particular graces apportioned to the Visitandines; and that the Spirit of God is there moulding *evangelical daughters and victims of the Heart of Jesus*, destined to be offered, together with this immolated Heart, on the altar of the cross. The ceremony of the clothing is like the presentation and oblation of a victim before the majesty of the living God; it is an image and a reproduction of the mystery of the Presentation of Jesus in the temple, by the hands of the Virgin Mary.†

The signification of these rites shone forth with redoubled splendour when they were performed for the virgin who had been chosen by Jesus to be the victim of His Heart. The high priest places upon her head the sacred veil, the emblem of widowhood, the memorial of the passion and death of her Spouse.‡ She then receives the name of

\* *Pontif. Rom. loc. cit.*

† The mode of giving the habit to the sisters of the Visitation.

‡ *Ibid.*

Anne Madeleine, a name of glory, a new name,\* which she is to bear in the service of Jesus Christ. Her inflamed countenance and extatic look show that she is lost in God. The liveries of this world are taken from her, and replaced by the monastic dress, but she sees nothing that is passing; in this supernatural state she is led into the choir. Tears flowed from every eye, and Monseigneur de Belzunce himself partook of the general emotion. Assuredly the Divine Spouse pressed to His Heart in that hour this pure victim of His love.† “Perfect souls,” says S. Ambrose, “repose on the breast of Christ, as did S. John; they rise up, leaning upon Him whom they love.”‡ Thus did Sœur Anne Madeleine rise up: she rose, leaning on the Heart of Jesus, to a new and heavenly life.

Sweet and solemn to a religious soul is the hour of her ascension into this higher life, and of the *donation* of herself to a spiritual mother, who is ready to form her, to adorn her with virtues, to govern her acts, to teach her, in a word, how to please Him whom she loves. For this, to a monastic virgin, is the signification of her entry into the novitiate.

It may also be said that this hour is not less sweet for the mistress of novices, the spiritual mother, who thus receives anew, from the hands

\* Apoc. ii. 17.

† *Vie, etc. loc. cit.*

‡ *De Isaac et anima.*

of Jesus Himself, this soul freshly bedewed with the graces of His mystical espousals. An ineffable sympathy must assuredly arise in that moment between these two souls, whom God has joined by a tie so full of mystery.

There is a spiritual paternity, which has its origin in the bosom of the heavenly Father,\* and which rests in Jesus Christ, the Apostle and the High Priest of the Church,† the Pastor and Bishop of our souls.‡ From Jesus Christ it flows into the members of the hierarchy, whose chiefs, established by the Holy Ghost Himself,§ spiritually beget souls,|| by causing them to be born to grace, and by feeding them with the divine sacraments.

But in the work of redemption, near to Jesus Christ, and second to Him, stands Mary, the Mother of God, and the mother of souls. The holy fathers call her unanimously the mother of the living, the source of life, the co-operatrix in the work of her Son, the helpmate of the Christ, the co-redemptress of the human race, in fine, the ministerial cause of our illumination, just as Jesus is its sole efficient and superabundant cause.¶

It is necessary that this admirable and divine economy of the redemption should reproduce

\* Ephes. iii. 15.

† Heb. iii. 1.

‡ Heb. xiii. 20; I. Petr. ii. 25.

§ Acts xxviii. 28.

|| I. Cor. iv. 15; Phil. 10.

¶ See my work entitled *Marie et le Sacerdote*, Paris, Vives, 3rd edition, c. 2.

itself until the end of time, and that Mary should always have likenesses of herself in the supernatural world, and, so to say, continuations of herself. Lower than the hierarchy of the Church, which exercises the paternity of Jesus over souls, it is fitting that virginity should be found in conjunction with spiritual maternity, and that virgins, with Mary, should become mothers of souls. This is admirably explained by S. Ambrose\* and S. Augustine. "The childbearing of the Christ by Mary," says the latter, "is an honour that is reflected upon all Christian virgins; with Mary they may become mothers of Christ, provided that they faithfully accomplish the will of the Father."† Virgins have then a right to rejoice because they are mothers of Christ. They beget Him in their own hearts; they beget Him again in the souls that are confided to them, and where (according to the beautiful expression of the apostle,)‡ Jesus is formed because of their fruitful charity, their continual prayers, their generous immolations, and their sublime teachings. How noble is this destiny of cloistered virgins, called to the joys of spiritual maternity! The Spirit of God pours into their souls a maternal love which is higher than the love of natural mothers. There is a mother mentioned in holy writ (Respha) who for long days and nights chased the birds of prey and

\* *De Cain et Abel*, lib. ii. c. 1.      † *De Sanct. Virgin.*

‡ *Galat.* iv. 9.

the ferocious beasts who sought to attack the seven sons of Saul, two among whom were her own sons, hanging on crosses, and offered in holocaust to the Lord.\* These virginal mothers, like Respha, watch day and night, averting by their prayers and penances the enemies that hell vomits forth for the destruction of their spiritual daughters, the pure victims of divine love, who are often fastened to the cross of trial and sacrifice.

But if the divine Spirit forms maternal souls in the Church, He also prepares filial souls, to whom He imparts docility, humility, and obedience. This spiritual childhood is a virtue that springs from the sacred mystery of the childhood of Jesus Christ. In His excessive desire to glorify God, the Eternal Word went down into an abyss of humility, when He descended into the womb of His creature, and drew thence a new life. What condescension on the part of Him who is Life Itself! No sooner had He assumed the first germ of this new existence than from the secret tabernacle of the womb of Mary He presented Himself to His Father, and taking the language and the attitude of a victim, He said in His Heart: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire; but Thou hast formed a body for Me, and Thou hast pierced ears for Me that are attentive to Thy commandments. Burnt offering and sin offering Thou didst not require: then said I,

\* I. Reg. xxi. 8, 10.

Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will: O My God, I have desired it, and Thy law, in the midst of My heart."\*

This is the secret language of Jesus Christ, when He makes His entry into the world by the closed door, that is to say, by the virginal womb of Mary. This is the deep feeling of His Heart in the very first instant of its beating. He thinks only of sacrifice and obedience. Understanding the splendour of the holiness of God, the admirable movement of His Will, and the infinite perfection of His love, He has an immense desire to conform Himself to His eternal decrees. Contemplating in the divine light the necessity of reparation for the crimes of the world, and touched at the sight, His generous Heart blesses God for the law of death entailed upon Him, and He embraces that law with unspeakable transports. He will therefore be entirely led by the action of the Holy Ghost,† and perfectly subject to His holy Mother and to His adopted father.‡ Mary shall carry Him where God has commanded; she shall present Him in the temple§ as the Victim of the great sacrifice; she shall direct all His acts. O mystery of divine love! the Word has so loved the virtue of obedience that He has

\* Ps. xxxix. 9, 10, 11.—Heb. x. 5, 6, 7.

† Mat. iv. 1.

‡ Luc. ii. 51.

§ Luc. ii. 22, 39.



become a little child in order the better to embrace it.

Admirable is the light that flows from this sacred mystery for the instruction of novice souls. It was fully appreciated by Anne Madeleine. She abandoned herself entirely into the hands of her mistress, Sœur Anne Gravier, and from that great maternal soul she imbibed the spirit of the religious family in which God had placed her. She did not forget that she had been chosen to be a victim, and she cherished in her heart the law of mortification, of penance, and of sacrifice, that had been imposed upon her. Under such circumstances the will of the soul and the will of God ought to become so identical that the soul wills all that God wills, and wills nothing that is not conformed to the will of God. The soul must also renounce all creatures ; she must make the sacrifice of all her actions and of all her powers, that is, of her knowledge, her intellect, her feelings, and of all the things that are contrary to the will of God, in order that she may become like to Him, and that, possessing nothing that is not according to the will of God, she may be quite transformed in Him.\* The Child Jesus is the most admirable model to us of this perfect state ; and the fervent novice regarded it as the term towards which all her endeavours should tend.

\* S. John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Carmel*, b. ii. chap. 5.

She seems to tell us so herself when she exclaims :  
" Lord, Thou wilt endow Thy poor creature with all that Thou desirest to find in her, and in rendering her capable of an infinite good Thou wilt enlarge her capacities so that she may contain that infinite good. O my God, my soul wishes neither for light nor darkness, neither riches nor poverty. Thou canst give or take away ; Thou canst plant or uproot, build up or destroy. All that it is permitted me to will is precisely that which it pleaseth Thee to do."\*

A positive passion for obedience will possess the soul that has received such lights concerning the will of God, magnificent and glorious, as Pope S. Clement calls it.† It is not astonishing therefore to find that Anne Madeleine observed with rigorous exactitude the constitutions, the rules, and the customs of her order, and that she faithfully executed all the commands of the mistress of novices. Thenceforward self-love and self-will seemed to be annihilated within her. Never did she permit herself the least reflection regarding the dictates of authority ; never did she show the least sign either of repugnance or of preference, but she did all that was required of her with

\* *Spiritual Retreat of Sœur Anne Madeleine*, Meditation for the Eve of the Retreat. This writing was composed in the first year of her religious life. These same sentiments are found in her *Spiritual Lent*, written at the same time.

‡ Ep. I. ad Cor.

unaltered mien and a serenity that was unshaken even in the hour of bitterness and of humiliation. In a word, the life of the humble novice was no longer earthly ; it was wholly supernatural.

But the hour of trial is at hand. " If the grain of wheat falling into the earth dieth not, it will not produce fruit ; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."\* It is necessary that this soul should be bruised, and the Divine Master is about to unfold His design in this respect. Three sorts of trials are reserved for the generous victim of the Sacred Heart ; they will all conduce to prepare her for her beautiful mission. Among these, the first were the trials of the novitiate, which would not be worth speaking of had they only been of the ordinary description ; but they were, on the contrary, of exceptional severity. The First Monastery of the Visitation of *Marseilles* was, as we have already said, an admirable school of spirituality. From the month of May, in the year of which we speak, the *Mère Anne Augustine Gravier*, elected superior, had been replaced in the direction of the novitiate by *Mère Anne Théodore Nogaret*, who was a consummate mistress in the art of directing souls. The formation of *Sœur Rémusat* may be said to have been her masterpiece. She understood in an admirable degree the designs of God concerning this privileged virgin, and she devoted all her

\* *Joan. xii. 24, 25.*

efforts to seconding divine grace, which constitutes indeed the very essence of direction. Therefore, in proportion as the virtues of the sister shone forth and bore fruit in the good example they exhibited to the other novices, the more did this experienced mistress inflict reprimands, contradictions, and humiliations on her spiritual daughter. She aimed at withholding from her all human satisfactions, and even the divine consolations. Did the sister show a more than ordinary thirst for communion or for prayer, she was bidden to abstain, now from a communion prescribed by the rule, or again from an extraordinary communion ; or she would be taken away from the church to be employed in some material work. This severe mistress took care never to express any admiration for the work done by Anne Madeleine, but was, on the contrary, full of criticism, often making the novice begin it all over again. The patience of Anne Madeleine never faltered ; she would kneel down to receive these corrections, and her beaming countenance testified to the joy she felt in thus sharing in the humiliations of her Spouse.\*

The second kind of trials that were inflicted on her came from her companions in the novitiate. They loved her tenderly, but they could not deny themselves the pleasure of trying her patience, to see how much it would stand. They amused

\* *Vie*, etc. c. 5.

themselves therefore by assailing her with witticisms and raillery that would have upset a soul less self-possessed, or less docile to the divine will. Anne Madeleine felt keenly pained, but nothing of this appeared on the surface; she was ever gentle and good. We will quote some traits of her heroism.

One day her mistress ordered that her hair should be cut. Her companions thought it fun to surround her and assist in the operation. The one who was charged with its execution did not spare Sœur Anne Madeleine, but dragged some of her hair out by the roots, and cut her head with the scissors. Their cruel propensities were gratified, for the poor martyr flinched not, and did not change even the sweet expression of her face. Another day, a novice, in fastening her veil, ran a pin into her head by misadventure. The sister left it there, and the blood that soon flowed from the wound alone betrayed her heroism. On another occasion, when she was once in bed with a fever, a nun went to see her in order to take care of her, but changing her mind suddenly, she resolved to try her and annoy her in every way. "You are too covered," she said, while dragging off a covering; "how do you feel now?" "Very well," replied the novice. This did not prevent the nun from heaping several more coverings on the bed, saying: "But would you not feel better if you were more covered?" And, in fine, she

continued for a long time to alternately heap on more coverings, and then take them all away again; but Sœur Anne Madeleine remained as if impassible,\* proving that she had attained to that perfect indifference, of which S. Francis de Sales says that it is "the cream of charity, the odour of humility, the merit, it would seem, of patience, and the fruit of perseverance."†

Interior trials were the third crucible in which Sœur Anne Madeleine was purified. For an entire year, except at rare intervals, she was beset with the most fearful thoughts of despair, violent temptations against the faith, cruel fears of the divine justice, dryness and desolation; in fine, with inexpressible anguish and bitterness. The devil frequently agitated her heart by horrible tempests, and he overshadowed her mind with thick darkness. The poor child could with difficulty stifle her groans, which were heard in the neighbouring cells.

But these interior pains were far from appeasing her thirst for sufferings, and she added exterior mortification to them. She made incessant war against nature; she gave no satisfaction to her senses, and continually importuned her mistress for leave to give herself up to the practice of penance. Marvellous was it that a young girl of her tender years, given up to such austerities, and

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 5.

† Serm. xxxii. Motives of our love for Jesus Christ.

depriving herself as far as possible of rest and nourishment, could even live. It is true that, from time to time she was recompensed and sustained by divine delights, which overcame her in the presence of the whole community. At these happy times she was taken away from the others, and left to pour out her loving heart in peace and solitude.\*

From the time she entered the novitiate, grace had begun to prepare her in a more direct manner for her future apostolate. The young novice was greatly enlightened concerning the souls of others, and was full of burning zeal for their sanctification. The Heart of Jesus, hidden in her soul, shone in her exterior, and gave to her person the aspect of a saint. Her words then produced extraordinary effects on those who surrounded her, and her very appearance had the gift of encouraging and inciting others to virtue.†

Always attentive to the action of grace, the incomparable mistress of novices discerned here again the design of God, and in order to second it faithfully, she hesitated not to take an exceptional step. She confided to Sœur Anne Madeleine the care of giving the first instructions to the postulants and novices; and for fear that this might prove an occasion of pride to her, she gave her to understand that it was a punishment due to her

\* *Vie*, etc., loc. cit.

† *Vie*, etc., loc. cit.

inobservance of the rules and customs of the monastery. Moreover, she relaxed none of her severity, and in this way prudently counterbalanced the honour she had conferred upon her.\*

Once installed in this important little office, Anne Madeleine showed what she would be one day. She endeavoured to know the souls that she wished to lead to God; she studied their characters, discerned their weak points, and drew up her plan of conduct towards each. She soon gained their confidence, and led them wherever she would. All her young flock surrounded and clung to her; completely subjugated by the charm of her piety, by her holy joyousness, by her gracious and winning manners, they hardly left her time to follow her exercises. To one, whose heart lay open before her, she pointed out the obstacle that prevented grace; to another, who was trying to elude the power of grace, she predicted that God would, in the hour of need, overcome her resistance by a miracle; one who was hesitating in her vocation was delivered from her trouble at the voice of her saintly companion, and received courage to make the last sacrifices to her God; one more, in fine, who had recourse to her in an hour of doubt was delivered from all her doubts, and enlightened concerning her most hidden faults. God blessed the zeal of His servant, for the novitiate was soon so extraordinarily fer-

\* *Vie*, etc., loc. cit.



vent that the oldest professed were no less edified than surprised. Indeed, it was quite novel to see a young novice of sixteen years filled with the supernatural gifts that generally adorn an experienced directress, and exercising over other souls such great and useful influence.\*

The reputation of Sœur Anne Madeleine soon spread beyond the monastery. Many who heard of her marvellous power of gaining souls to God, begged that they might be allowed to see her in the parlour, in order to consult her about their spiritual interests. The superiors thought it right to gratify this eagerness of persons in the world, and the good effects which resulted showed that their conduct was wise and prudent. The discourses of Sœur Rémusat contributed indeed to the salvation of many souls, and the opinion that was formed of her virtue cast a new halo around the daughters of Saint Chantal. Several young persons consulted her about their vocations, and determined by her counsels, and with the hope of living in her society, they gave themselves to God in the monastery, thus increasing the number of fervent religious.†

Such was the Sœur Anne Madeleine at the end of her novitiate. As we have seen, Jesus had prepared in a marvellous manner the victim and apostle of His Heart. Victim and apostle of the Sacred Heart! let us repeat these words with admiration, for they express the twofold character

\* *Vie, loc. cit.*

† *Vie, etc. c. 5.*

of this tender virgin, whose heroism, martyrdom of soul, and supernatural state in her grand mission, will make of her one of the most beautiful souls in her Order. And now the hour of her solemn consecration is come; the oblation that she made of herself on the day of her clothing is about to be irrevocably sealed by the sacred vows. The ceremony of the profession was fixed for the 23rd January, 1713, the anniversary of the birth of St. Jane Frances de Chantal. A number of persons of distinction have accompanied the family de Rémusat, in order to witness the solemn engagement that the humble novice is about to contract. As on the day of the clothing, it is Monseigneur de Belzunce who ascends the altar steps. The worthy pastor would not yield to anyone the joy of uniting for ever to Jesus Christ his beloved daughter, and of offering on the altar of the Lord these noble first-fruits of his flock.\*

The ceremony of the profession of a Visitandine is imposing. After the novice has pronounced the solemn vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, and has consecrated her person and her life to the Divine Majesty, to the Virgin Mary, and to the Congregation, she is covered with the black veil; then, prostrated with her face on the ground, a pall is spread over her, while the high priest and the choir alternately proclaim, in religious chants, her death to the world, and her new life in God.†

\* *Ite*, etc. c. 6.

† *Formulary for the profession of the Sisters of the Visitation Sainte Marie.*

This prostration before the altar of the Lord is an act of supreme respect towards the sanctity and the infinite majesty of God. Christ imposes it upon His high priests and priests, upon His levites, and upon His virgins, at the moment of their irrevocable consecration.\* How great must have been thy happiness, O pious virgin, in that sweet moment, when Jesus united Himself to thy soul with such unspeakable tenderness! It was then, doubtless, that under the impression of the heavenly spirit, thou didst make those acts that afterwards thou didst so well explain; in the silence and annihilation of thy being, thou didst adore the sanctity and sovereignty, the greatness and divinity of the Heart of Jesus Christ; and taking before Him the dispositions of a victim who wished to be united with Him, and to revenge upon herself the outrages that He receives from men, thou didst say to Him in His own words:—"Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not; then said I, behold, I come."†

\* Pontif. Rom. de Consecrat. electi in Ep.; de ordinat. presbyt., diac. et subdiac., de Benedict et Consecrat Virg.

† Spiritual Lent of Sœur Anne Madeleine.

## CHAPTER IV.

## The Cross.

"Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates, nostras attritus est propter scelera nostra . . . et posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum. Oblatus est quia ipse voluit.—He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins; the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was offered because it was His own will."—*Isa.* liii. 5, 6, 7.

Behold then Anne Madeleine constituted the victim of the Sacred Heart! Succeeding to the mission of the Blessed Margaret Mary, she will sacrifice herself entirely for the reparation of sin, for the salvation of souls, for the exaltation of the divine Heart. This was the purpose for which she was born; and this will be her distinctive character among the rest of holy souls. We have seen her extended on the pavement of the temple, and presented at the altar to the divine majesty. That was the preparatory oblation, which forms a part of every sacrifice.\* The immolation of the victim will

\* See my work entitled, "*Marie et le Sacerdote*," Paris, Vives, 3rd edition, chap. 5 and 6, in which the theory of sacrifice is explained in full. It is necessary that the theory should be well known, as the idea of sacrifice recurs in each page of the life of Anne Madeleine. For another reason, we beg the

follow, and in this we must study the delicate operations of grace in the soul of which God intends to make an image of the crucified Heart of His Son.\*

Such a study can scarcely be undertaken without glancing first at the Divine Model. Let us ask Jesus to manifest Himself to us in His office of victim of the salutary sacrifice, and to throw a new light on the sublime dispositions with which His Heart allowed itself to be immolated to the glory of God. For even in these days, when the Church is so persecuted, and blasphemy is rampant in the face of heaven, the Spirit of God still forms and raises up souls who weep, pray, and make reparation in union with the Heart of Christ. These souls have need to know even better and better their sweet Master, that they may abide with Him on the altar of the Cross, and may in a measure be filled with His holy dispositions.

reader to extend the circulation of "*Marie et le Sacerdoce*." As will be seen in the magnificent brief of His Holiness Pope Pius IX., and also in the letter of His Eminence Cardinal Dechamps, Archbishop of Malines, and other bishops, the object of the work is to set forth, more theologically and completely than has as yet been done, the relations of the Blessed Virgin with the priesthood. It is very opportune, and at the same time most beneficial to the clergy, that this work should be circulated, and this special glory of Mary brought forward, in these days when the priesthood is so much attacked, and has to sustain such terrible conflicts.

\* Rom. viii. 29.

The immolation of Jesus began in the Garden of Olives. There His soul began to be submerged in grief, fear, and disgust.\* But in this deep sorrow, in order to show His respect towards the God who visits upon Him the sins of men, He falls upon His face, and He prays.† Oh! admirable and touching prayer! Three times He asks His heavenly Father that the chalice may pass away, but yet He consents to drink it to the dregs.‡ While the prayer, ever increasing in fervour, mounts up to heaven, on the earth there flows forth a sweat of blood amid terrible agony.§ These drops of blood and these prayers show us the interior dispositions of the Heart of Jesus. The prayer shows us His perfect submission; the blood tells us that He has been crushed by sorrow, and bruised like the grape of the vine, in the wine-press of the justice of God.

Nevertheless, the holy Victim went forth to torments. "Shall I not," He says, "drink the chalice that My Father hath given Me?"|| He went like a lamb which openeth not its mouth.¶ He went to outrage, to the scourge, to the crowning with thorns, to the Cross.

Let us contemplate Him in the moment when He allows Himself to be fastened to the fatal wood. What then was the disposition of His Heart?

\* Mat. xxvi. 37; Marc. xiv. 33.

† Mat. xxvi. 39.

‡ Mat. xxvi. 39, 42, 44.

§ Luc. xxii. 43, 44.

|| Joan. xviii. 11.

¶ Isa. liii. 7; Act viii. 32.

Jesus had said, speaking of His Passion:—"I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?"\* And so, notwithstanding the terror that He feels at the sight of such a fearful doom, He sighs after the Cross; and when at length He finds it, in the folly of His love for God and for us, He falls upon the wood of which it is made, just as David, simulating madness, stumbled against the doors of the gate.† He allows Himself to be fastened with nails, as Isaac allowed himself to be bound and laid upon the pile of wood that served as an altar.‡ Here we see the Heart of the Priest and of the Victim: of the Priest who, in the action of sacrifice, the act of respect, assumes a worthy and solemn attitude; of the Victim who, by the respectful immobility to which He condemns Himself, shows His profound veneration for God, and who, by the open wounds of His hands and feet, demonstrates the extent of His mercies towards us.

But the Cross is raised up in the air, laden with its precious Burden. O Spirit of God, grant that we may understand the ascension of the Heart of Jesus§ during this ascension of the Cross.

Jesus is charged with the sins of the world, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. His beauty and His glory are obscured thereby,

\* Luc. xii. 50.

† 1 Reg. xxi. 13, 14; V. A. 15. Enarr. in Ps. xxxiii. serm 1.

‡ Gen. xxii 9.

§ Ps. lxxxiii. 6.

and He seems a leper, an object of contempt, the last of men.\* Thus rejected of earth, He looks up to outraged heaven. Laden with our sins, He draws nigh to His Father, whose infinite sanctity He clearly discerns. He stands before the infinite justice of the God who is about to slay Him, to pierce Him for our transgressions.† As He approaches nearer to the arm that is raised in vengeance over Him, His torments increase, His anguish becomes extreme. He feels more and more His abandonment. And nevertheless, as the prophet affirms, He was offered because it was His own will;‡ and His love is so generous, His desires so ardent, that only such an ascension could have satisfied Him.

Beside the Cross stood Mary. We must not forget this, for she will be the model of Anne Madeleine. Associated to the priesthood of Christ, and upheld by the Divine Spirit, she wills most firmly the sacrifice of her beloved Son; she offers this sweet Son, she presents Him to the infinite justice for the fulfilment of His own ends.

At the same time her heart unites itself with the Heart of the Victim, entering, so to say, into that sacred movement, that ascension under the thunders of the holiness of God, which we have endeavoured to set forth. But then also, as had been prophesied, a sword of sorrow pierced her soul.§

At length the Cross is lifted up: Jesus is there,

\* Isa. liii. 2, 3, 4, 6.

† Is. liii. 7.

‡ Is. liii. 5.

§ Luc. ii. 35.



His arms extended, accomplishing the august action of the sacrifice. He suffers the chastisement that is to procure peace for us, and by His bruises we are healed.\*

Let us study His Heart. From His Heart, as from His lips, fell those seven admirable words recorded by the Gospel. Jesus prays for His executioners.† He applies the price of His blood to the good thief.‡ He gives us a mother, and He leaves us to this mother in His place.§ He cries out towards His heavenly Father, in order that men, when they hear Him, may be touched by His desolation.|| He says that He thirsts—it is for our love.¶ He announces that all is consummated ;\*\* and He commits His soul into the hands of His Father.††

These are not the only words of Jesus. During the three hours that He hung upon the Cross, He uttered other mysterious and interior words, that were not heard on earth, but are made known to us by the Holy Spirit, speaking by the mouth of the royal prophet. Let us open the twenty-first and sixty-eighth Psalms. The Church, who has received the sense of the Scriptures‡‡ from her divine Head, teaches us that they refer to Christ on the Cross, and not only contain the words of the cru-

\* Isa. liii. 5.      † Luc. xxiii. 34.      ‡ Luc. xxiii. 43.

§ Joan. xix. 26, 27.      || Mat. xxvii. 46 ; Marc. xv. 34.

¶ Joan. xix. 28.

\*\* Joan. xix. 30.

†† Luc. xxiii. 46.

‡‡ Luc. xxiv. 45.

cified, but are the prophetic image of His interior dispositions during the last hours of His Passion. This indeed may be inferred from the expressions of St. Cyril of Alexandria,\* St. Athanasius,† and St. Augustine.‡ It is even of faith that at least several passages of these Psalms refer to the Man-God, since they are quoted in the New Testament as belonging to Him;§ and moreover, the Church has condemned in one of her œcumenical councils the doctrine which maintained that the twenty-first Psalm did not apply literally to the Person of Christ.|| Let us refer to these two inspired songs of David, and endeavour to understand the impressions, the prayers, the sorrowful murmurs of Jesus on the Cross; this will give us a deeper knowledge of the sweet Heart of the Lamb who was slain.

“O God! My God,” said the Holy One on Calvary, “look upon Me: why hast Thou forsaken

\* In Ps. xxi., and in Ps. lxviii.

† Exposit. in Ps. xxi., and in Ps. lxviii

‡ Enar. in Ps. xxi., and in Ps. lxviii. These are his words: “Dicuntur autem ista in persona crucifixi: nam de capite Psalmi hujus sunt verba quæ ipse clamavit cum in cruce penderet, personam etiam servans veteris hominis, cujus mortalitatem portavit.”

§ From Ps. xxi. verse 2, in Mat. xxvii. 46, and in Marc. xv. 43; verse 8 in Mat. xxvii. 29, and in Marc. xv. 29; v. 9 in Mat. xxvii. 43; v. 19 in Mat. xxvii. 35, and in Joan. xix. 23, 24; v. 23 in Heb. ii. 12. From Ps. lxviii. v. 10, in part from Joan. ii. 17, and in part from Rom. xv. 3; v. 22 in Mat. xxvii. 48.

|| Théodore of Marseilles, who taught this error, was condemned in the Fifth Œcumenical Council, II. de C. P.

Me? Far from My salvation are the words of My sins. O my God, I shall cry by day, and Thou wilt not hear; and by night, and it shall not be reputed as folly in Me. But Thou dwellest in the holy place, the praise of Israel. In Thee have our fathers hoped; they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them. They cried to Thee, and they were saved: they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm and no man; the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head. They have said: This man hath hoped in God, let God deliver Him: let Him save Him, seeing He delighteth in Him. For Thou art He that hast drawn Me out of the womb; My hope from the breasts of My mother, and I was cast upon Thee from the womb. From My mother's womb Thou art My God; depart not from Me. For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help Me. Many calves have surrounded Me; fat bulls have besieged Me. They have opened their mouths against Me, as a lion ravening and roaring. I am poured out like water, and all My bones are scattered. My *Heart* has become like wax melting in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue hath cleaved to My jaws: and Thou hast brought Me down into the dust of earth. For many dogs have encompassed Me: the council of the malignant

hath besieged Me. They have pierced My hands and feet; they have numbered all My bones. And they have looked and stared upon Me: they parted My garments amongst them, and on My vesture they cast lots. But Thou, My Lord, remove not My help to a distance from Me; look towards my defence. Deliver, O Lord, My soul from the sword; My Only One from the hand of the dog. Save Me from the lion's mouth; and My lowness from the horns of these persecutors like to unicorns."\*

"Save Me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto My soul. . . . Let not them be ashamed for Me, who look for Thee, O Lord, the Lord of Hosts. Let them not be confounded on My account, who seek Thee, O God of Israel. Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach, shame hath covered My face. I am become a stranger to My brethren, and an alien to the sons of My mother. For the zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me. . . . In Thy sight are all they that afflict Me; My Heart hath expected reproach and misery. And I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none: and for one that would comfort Me, and I found none. And they gave Me gall for My food: and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."†

\* Ps. xxi. 2-22.

† Ps. lxviii. 2, 7-10, 21, 22.

Here let us pause while we think over these last words of Jesus. How grief-laden are His complaints, how admirable the prayers that He pours forth amidst His terrible agony! Well do they portray not alone the intense suffering in all His members, but the far worse anguish of His soul, when His Heart was given over to weakness, to desolation, to aridity, to uncertainty, and to the terror of abandonment. Immense indeed was the zeal for the glory of His heavenly Father that made Him desire these torments! He casts a look of love on His mother, the associate of His sacrifice, as He remembers that in her virginal womb His Heart first gave itself to God. Nowhere has the Holy Spirit given us so true a representation of the feelings of the Heart of Jesus, as in these inspired songs of David, uttered more than a thousand years before the Incarnation.

Let us continue. He who is the supereminent sanctity, the perfect dominion, and the sovereign royalty,\* has chosen to receive from the Victim thus given over to intolerable torments, an adoration which alone is fully worthy of Him. Essential goodness and infinite justice wills that when about to sink under His torments, the humble Lamb shall pour forth before His face a song of thanksgiving and praise. Wherefore the Holy Spirit, without softening in the least degree the anguish and sufferings of the Victim hanging on the Tree,

\* Dion. Aréop. *De div. nom.* c. xi.

transports His soul in so marvellous a manner, that it finds vent in these immortal accents :—

“I will declare Thy name to My brethren ; in the midst of the Church will I praise Thee. Ye that fear the Lord praise Him ; all ye the seed of Jacob glorify Him. Let all the seed of Israel fear Him, because He hath not slighted nor despised the supplication of the poor man. Neither hath He turned away His face from Me ; and when I cried to Him He heard Me. With Thee is My praise in a great Church ; I will pay My vows in the sight of them that fear Him. The poor shall eat and shall be filled ; and they shall praise the Lord that seek Him ; their hearts shall live for ever and ever. All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord. And all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in His sight. For the kingdom is the Lord’s, and He shall have dominion over the nations. All the fat ones of the earth have eaten, and have adored. All they that go down to the earth shall fall before Him.\* And to Him My soul shall live ; and My seed shall serve Him. There shall be declared to the Lord a generation to come, and the heavens shall show forth

\* The text runs : “the happy ones of earth.” According to the etymology of the Hebrew it would indicate the ministers of the sacrifice. The second part of the verse alludes doubtless to the dying, who, after receiving the Eucharist, adore the Lord.

His justice to a people that shall be born, which the Lord hath made."\*

We see in this sublime canticle that in the midst of inconceivable tortures, the Heart of Jesus overflowed with love towards His heavenly Father. He was concerned about His brethren, to whom He was about to manifest the name of God yet more clearly. He was concerned about our souls, for whom He had prepared a divine repast. He was concerned also about His Church, who was about to issue forth from Him as an Immaculate Spouse. Knowing that His sacrifice was not merely a sacrifice of reparation and of prayer, but was also a sacrifice of adoration and of thanksgiving, He not only expiated and prayed, He also adored profoundly, and broke forth into exclamations of praise and transports of joy at the sight of the divine marvels, and of the glory that His torments would procure to His God until the end of ages. After these admirable acts, there was nothing more remaining to this sweet Heart but to sink in death, to be opened, and to pour forth upon the Church Its life-giving floods.

While we have been thus contemplating the dispositions of the Heart of Jesus during His three hours upon the Cross, we have not lost sight of

\* Ps. xxi. 23 to the end. We do not again quote from the sixty-eighth Psalm, because towards the end, after a prophecy concerning the terrible chastisements that are reserved for the impious, we find expressions like those of the twenty-first Psalm, and which it is therefore useless to repeat.

Sœur Anne Madeleine. The interpreters of Scripture tell us that Jesus poured forth these canticles of praise and these cries of tribulation, not in His own name alone, but in the name of His persecuted Church, and of all the members of His mystical body, who are to be crucified with Him until the end of time.\* So, when a Christian soul has by her trials acquired some resemblance with her Head, when she partakes of the sufferings of Christ,† when she unites herself to the divine sacrifice for the redemption of other souls, she has a right to appropriate to herself more or less completely the sentiments of the Crucified One; she has a right to grieve with Him over the outrages done to God, to pray, to adore, and to give thanks in union with His Heart. As to Sœur Anne Madeleine, she had, like Blessed Margaret Mary, been chosen by our Lord Himself to be His victim; and it is not therefore surprising that it was given to her to have a share in the sufferings of His agonising Heart. The divine Spirit was pleased to retrace in her in an especial manner the impressions that the Heart of the divine Victim underwent upon the Cross. He formed in this soul, so admirably prepared, prayers and desires like to those described by the king-prophet. This it is that gives its own proper character to the interior life of Anne Madeleine, and explains the griefs and

\* See for instance S. Aug. in Psal. lxxviii. serm. 1.

† 1 Peter iv. 13.



supernatural joys that sometimes simultaneously possessed her soul.

We left the fervent Visitandine pursuing the pious exercises of her religious life, which had just been crowned by her solemn profession. The special grace that she then received was an increased attraction towards the tabernacle. Not being able to spend many hours in the daytime before the Blessed Sacrament, she obtained permission of the Superior to employ a portion of the night in prayer before the Altar. But our Lord now began to give her a share in His physical sufferings. He sent her violent headaches, which attacked her for several days in each week.\* A miracle, however, soon delivered her from this suffering, to make room, though, for fresh trials. One Thursday night, after twenty-four hours passed without food on account of her headache, the pious professed asked permission of Mère Nogaret to spend the night before the Blessed Sacrament, in honour of the agony of the Saviour in the Garden of Olives. Although accustomed to these kind of requests, the worthy Superior was loth to accede to her desire this time; and she even pretended displeasure, and accused her spiritual daughter of imprudence. The latter, however, persisted with gentle daring. "Well then," replied the mother, "I will permit it once more, but it is on the condition that you ask our

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 6.

Lord to deliver you from headaches. If He hears you, I shall know by this sign that you are led by His Holy Spirit, and I shall thenceforward leave you to His direction." These words filled Anne Madeleine with joy and gratitude. She hastened to ask her Divine Spouse to grant the wished for sign. Scarcely was she on her knees than she obtained the object of her prayer: her headache instantaneously left her, and she never again suffered from it in the least degree.\*

When the Superior heard next day of this unexpected cure, she withdrew from Anne Madeleine all the extra care and indulgences that her delicate state had rendered necessary. The whole community knew from this of the wonderful favour that the divine Master had granted to His servant. From that day Mère Nogaret hesitated no longer between her fear of resisting the will of our Lord, and her wish to preserve an existence so precious to the monastery. Following the advice of Père Milley, whose consummate and enlightened prudence inspired her with perfect confidence, and counting, moreover, on the supernatural strength wherewith God did not fail to enable His victim to pursue her career of austerity and penance, the wise mistress allowed Anne Madeleine henceforward to follow freely the powerful attraction of grace.†

From that day the sister began to walk more

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 6.

† *Vie*, etc., *ibid*.

closely in the footsteps of her Crucified Spouse. Burning with the desire to sacrifice herself for the glory and the sacred interests of her God, she gave herself up to the most rigorous austerities. She covered her body with a hair shirt; she wore a chain round her waist, and iron bracelets on her arms; and on her breast she bore a heart made of sharp points. These instruments are still preserved as precious relics in the Monastery of the Visitation at Marseilles. In addition, she reduced herself to one single repast in the day, which was of so scanty a description, that it was marvellous how it sufficed to keep her in existence. It would indeed have been impossible for the generous penitent to have practised so much austerity on such a feeble organization without extraordinary help from the divine Master. For notwithstanding that she was free from headaches, her physical sufferings had not abated, and she was consumed by a continual fever. Sometimes her strength abandoned her to such a degree that she seemed near death; her sufferings then were dreadful. She passed three nights in the week before the tabernacle on her knees, motionless, her face radiant with a heavenly expression. During the other nights it was rare that her rest of three or four hours was not troubled, either by physical sufferings, or by interior trials, or the transports of divine love. But after these extatic nights, when she was obliged sometimes to lay damp cloths

upon her breast that burned with the ardours of divine love, she rose with the dawn, filled with a supernatural strength, and went about her ordinary occupations. She performed all her duties with great zeal, and with the rare capacity and intelligence with which Heaven had gifted her, bearing her interior martyrdom, and revealing to none the secret of her sufferings.\*

The fruit of these vigils, prayers, and austerities did not belong to this heroic soul. Jesus disposed of it according to His own will, and in union with the infinite merits of His sacrifice, for the salvation of souls. This was one of the conditions of the alliance that He had contracted with Anne Madeleine, and which, later on, she sealed by a formal vow.† Anne Madeleine is a victim who must pray and suffer unceasingly for the reparation of sin, and whom the divine Sacrificer will immolate, in union with His own Heart, for the ends that He has in view. We shall see that one of the principal ends for which He will ask for prayers and penances from this chosen victim, is the salvation of certain souls consecrated to God. Who does not remember the sorrowful complaints of our Lord on this subject to Blessed Margaret Mary?

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 6 and 8.

† By this vow, made on the 8th December, 1727, she engaged to pray, suffer, and act, according to the movement of grace, for the persons to whom our Lord chose that her prayers and sufferings should be applied. The text may be seen in her *Account of Conscience*.

Showing her His Heart all torn and pierced, He said: "See the wounds that I receive from My chosen people. The others are content with striking My body, but these attack My Heart, which has never ceased to love them." At this sight the virgin of Paray was overcome with grief, and there was no suffering or humiliation that she would not have consented to endure to remove this sorrow from the Heart of her Spouse.\* Walking in her footsteps, Anne Madeleine stored up treasures of patience, of prayer, and of longanimity, which were all applied to the good of souls and to the interests of the Heart of Jesus.

Some instances will throw light on the truth of this fact, which is based on the principle of the transfer of merits. The pious Visitandine was one day assisting at Mass, when the deplorable state of two souls consecrated to God, and on the point of being lost, was clearly shown her. This vision produced such a painful effect upon her, that she fainted away. Little by little, and owing to the attentions of her sisters, her senses returned; but it was only to ejaculate, "Is it possible, O my God? What! souls that are consecrated to Thee?" But it was necessary at once to warn these two souls in peril, for the order of our Lord admitted of no delay. This was a new subject of pain and confusion for the humble victim of the Sacred Heart. At length, without divulging the secret from on

\* *Vie de la B. Marguerite Marie*, by her contemporaries.

high, they were communicated with, warned of their danger, and shown the necessity of a sincere conversion. Anne Madeleine on her side was not idle. Her prayer was uninterrupted, her tears flowed day and night, her penances were fearful. A great consolation was soon granted her, for she learnt that one of these two souls, yielding to grace, confessed its disorders, and threw itself into the arms of mercy. But alas ! neither the fear of chastisement nor the solicitations of grace softened the other. In vain did the heroic virgin multiply her supplications, and offer herself to suffer the rigours of infinite justice. The divine Master, wearied of the resistance of the guilty soul, and of the abuse that it made of the heavenly gifts, appeared to His servant, and made known to her its fate: "This soul hastens to its perdition, and persists in its sin ; I abandon it ! . . . ." These terrible words filled her with horror, and brought on a spitting of blood under which she would have sunk, had she not been preserved for her mission by supernatural strength.\*

Not merely the souls without, but also those within her beloved cloister, had Anne Madeleine to enrich with the fruit of her sufferings. She tells us this herself: "Some time ago," she writes to her director, "I asked our Lord why He permitted me to be in a community where I am refused the bread of humiliations and of sufferings. He seemed

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 6.

pleased at this demand, and, as if desirous of granting it, He made known to me that I should find among those with whom I lived, a kind of buffering, that none should know of, and that would make me bear the weight of all the faults that they would commit, and that He would give me all that would be requisite in order to detest and make reparation for them. From that time, in fact, I had a knowledge of the wants of our sisters, that worked in me and in them results worthy of the Master from whom they came; they were always most painful for me."\*

In order to make her worthy of her mission, the divine Master gave Anne Madeleine a heart fashioned after His Crucified Heart. He gave her a heart that was ardent, generous, and large as the shores of the sea.† Thenceforward nothing could content her zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; nothing could quench her thirst to be immolated. "I wish," she writes, "to see all creatures employed in making me suffer, but I do not deserve this happiness."‡ Is not this an echo of the sublime words of St. Teresa: "To suffer or to die"?

We see her a victim in everything. She asks continually for contempt, for public humiliation, and that she may be spared in nothing.§ In order to imitate her Master nailed to the Cross, she mul-

\* Account of Conscience.

† 3 Reg. iv. 29.

‡ Account of Conscience.

§ Vie, etc., c. 6.

ties the bonds that fasten her to the altar of sacrifice, and to these vows of religion she adds, like St. Teresa, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Blessed Margaret Mary, and some other holy souls, the vow always to do that which is most perfect. The Père Milley and Mère Nogaret agree in allowing her this favour, and until the end of her life we shall see that, owing to her solid judgment, and large-minded charity, she avoided trouble and scruples, which are the ordinary difficulties of a soul in this elevated state, and was perfectly faithful to this new and difficult engagement. In order to give her greater strength, the wise Bishop of Marseilles admitted her to daily communion, a privilege which was then rarely accorded.\* This feast of each day fanned in her the sacred fire which the God of the Eucharist came to cast upon the earth.† And so, when the heavenly Spouse asks her to place Him as a seal upon her heart,‡ she does not hesitate to perform a painful operation on her breast.

This incident is too beautiful to be omitted. This is how she relates it herself: "Some days previous to my retreat, I felt after communion a very great impulse to engrave the sacred name of God upon my body, in order that the impression of this holy name might sanctify my body at the same time that the interior operation divinised in

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 6 and 7.

† *Luc.* xii. 46.

‡ *Cant.* viii. 6.



some measure the soul. After my thanksgiving, I executed with iron and fire that which God had willed, without any idea that any other permission was needed. I understood, after I had done it, that God sometimes Himself commands us, and that He does not always leave us the liberty to apply to those who might assure us of His will."\*

Her director however was somewhat anxious when he heard of this fact, because the sister had not asked permission of her superiors. But she reassured him in the following words: "If in the inspiration of which I speak, I had had the least idea that it was necessary for me to ask permission, I would have done so; but I assure you, reverend father, such a thought never occurred to me. You may therefore rest tranquil on this point; the effects of the wound have been painful, but God has taken care of it in a way that convinces me that He demanded it of me."† This reply shows that Sœur Anne Madeleine was most judicious, and that she was capable of discerning the operations of grace. In like manner, her vow always to do the most perfect, stamps her as an heroic soul, worthy to rank among the holiest souls of her time.

But all the great qualities of Anne Madeleine would have failed in producing their legitimate fruit, had not God added to them a grace precious above all others, that of a firm and enlightened

\* Account of Conscience.

† Ibid:

direction. In this respect she was indeed most singularly privileged. In the first place, she had for her spiritual father the holy Bishop of Marseilles, who was well versed in interior ways, and whose influence was paramount in all the important circumstances of her life. As to her ordinary direction, we have already seen that this dispensation of providence placed her in the skilful hands of Père Milley ; and when we consider this remarkable fact in conjunction with the vocation of Père de la Colombière to direct Blessed Margaret Mary, it is impossible not to recognize here the admirable design of Providence, who had determined to associate the Company of Jesus with everything great that should be done for the glory of the Heart of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the superiors who at this time successively governed the first monastery of the Visitation of Marseilles were most superior and enlightened women. In fine, the whole of this direction, in which the ways of God with the soul of Anne Madeleine were closely studied, and the impressions of grace always seconded, save when hesitation was necessary for the better ascertaining the will of the divine Master, would seem to have been carried out in perfect conformity with the principles of mystical theology, as they are set forth in the lives of holy souls.

The victim of the Sacred Heart is prepared, then, and the Cross likewise is ready. Now is she about to be mystically nailed thereon, in body and in

soul, according to the expression of St. Ignatius of Antioch:\* now will her soul, founded in charity by the blood of Christ,† reflect as in a mirror some of the interior states of the slain Lamb. And just as Jesus told us of the sentiments of His Heart in the words of the royal Prophet, so will His spouse tell us of her feelings in words that formed part of her account of conscience. This is how she describes the supernatural favours that were conferred upon her: "The exterior pains with which it pleased our Lord to honour me, were so intense, my reverend father, that I thought to have died. It seemed to me at each instant that great nails were being driven into my hands and feet, and that my chest and sides were being burnt with live coals. I could not lean on those parts of my body without increasing my sufferings; at present they are a little less intense, except during the night, when I cannot refrain from groans and sighs: nature being then deprived of the relief which is available at other times. There is then nothing for me to do, dear father, save to sigh, and to receive with gratitude the sufferings that give me some little resemblance to my adorable Spouse Jesus. . . . I suffer from such violent headaches, especially during the night, that my sight is weakened to such an extent that in the morning I see things double. . . . I cannot tell you, reverend father, how much I suffer on account of

\* Ep. ad. Smyrn.

† Ibid.

the glorious favours with which my divine Spouse, has honoured me."

"The pains have not left me," wrote she on another occasion; "they are so intense, and their effects so surprising, that it seems to me I need miraculous assistance at each moment in order that I may not die. One morning, unable to stand on my feet without danger of falling, and the weariness of the body having passed into the soul, I must own, my reverend father, that I began to doubt that God would come to my help, and was about to seek aid elsewhere, when by an interior voice our Lord reproved me, and gave me to understand that the remedy was only to be sought in the cause that produced the evil.

"Expressions fail me, reverend father, to describe the liberality of a God who thus deigns to communicate Himself without measure to a vile creature. The shocks that His operation produces become ever more violent, and the body is exceedingly weakened thereby. God permits all that is human, to be suppressed when I am in these states, and I then consequently perceive nothing that falls under the senses; I only feel, when the operation is less violent, that it produces in me a conformity with Jesus, and that this commerce that He deigns to hold with me, makes me not only enter into the dispositions of His soul with regard to His Father, but also causes me to bear upon my body the marks that He bore to satisfy the divine justice. These

marks are sometimes glorious, but much more often they are painful ; this is according to the different impressions that are made in me. I cannot, in fact, my reverend father, compare my sufferings either to the application of iron or of fire ; they are above all comprehension, and yet they are always in proportion with the strength that is given. The capacity of suffering equals that of knowing, and it is knowledge that causes suffering. God seems to work a miracle at every moment, in order to sustain life under such an operation. How inadequate is the creature, reverend father, to sustain the liberty of a God !”\*

This astounding description of the ineffable gifts of Jesus to His spouse, show that she was nailed to the cross. As the cross was raised aloft, it raised the crucified one nearer to her God. Then her soul received a brighter light, and her knowledge was deepened. But this phenomenon produced in its turn a fresh phenomenon ; her capacity of suffering increased in proportion to her knowledge, for, as she has told us, it is knowledge that produces suffering. There is nothing more true or more remarkable than this fact. The researches of science have proved, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the intensity of the suffering is in direct proportion with the mental state of the sufferer. The clearer the perception of the sensation, the more intense is the fear of the suffering. It may

\* Account of Conscience:

even be said that suffering chiefly consists in the knowledge that one has of it; since human beings, who are gifted with a higher and more delicate mind, and have consequently a more perfect knowledge, are most sensitive; whilst the brute creation, and degenerate beings, are far less susceptible. It is not therefore surprising that a soul who is flooded with supernatural light should acquire an extraordinary discernment of painful sensations, nor that her capacity of suffering should be thereby raised to supernatural proportions. The soul may then well say that her sufferings in this state are above comprehension.

But there is something yet more admirable. Bathed in the divine light, the soul has a new and more perfect perception of the greatness of her God. She sees on the one side, better than ever before, her own nothingness and imperfections; and feeling nevertheless that she is ever being drawn nearer to His high Majesty, the contrast of her profound misery with Infinite Sanctity gives her unspeakable pain. St. Catharine of Genoa has, in her marvellous treatise on Purgatory, described the agony of a soul who, although in a state of grace, but still covered with stains, feels the approach of the absolutely perfect Being.\* Blessed Margaret Mary contemplated two sanctities in God, the sanctity of love and the sanctity of justice, both most rigorous in their way; and

\* *Tract. de Purgator.*

she describes her terrible impressions when they were brought to bear upon her.\* Scarcely did she feel the approach of the divine Master, and that He was about to draw aside the veil that hid the dazzling splendour of His sovereign Majesty, than she sank as it were in the abyss of her own nothingness, and prostrate on the ground, rendered homage to the Infinite Greatness.† So was it with Sœur Anne Madeleine. The external knowledge which gratifies her, increases her sufferings in various ways. No sufferings in this world can equal her torments when she sees herself to be a vile creature in the presence of the Holy of Holies, the sins of other souls laid upon her victimized soul, by an intimate divine operation, and has at the same time the most delicate perception of the painful marks that her body bears to satisfy the sanctity of justice. But she willingly accepts this martyrdom, and, as she herself tells us, she bears it with the sublime dispositions with which the Heart of Jesus was animated towards His heavenly Father, while He was being lifted up on His Cross.

It is fitting, however, that the likeness between Jesus crucified and His victim, between the Model and the copy, should become yet more striking, and therefore the phenomena of the stigmata is more clearly developed. Violent attacks of pain

\* *Life of B. Margaret Mary*, written by herself.

† *Ibid.*

and love wore out the poor victim, and in the dead silence of the night her plaintive groans were often heard. At length the divine Master, taking pity on His servant, condescended to make a proposition to her.

“During my prayer,” she tells us, “our Lord gave me my choice between the two following courses: that the marks with which He has deigned to honour me should appear exteriorly, and incite men to adore Him in His wondrous works, which course would be accompanied with a diminution of my pains; or that, on the contrary, the marks should remain hidden, and the pain become more intense,—this would tend more to His greater glory. I did not hesitate a moment to abandon myself to that which would contribute most to the glory of my Saviour, and I left the choice to Himself. He decided on the increase of suffering: but what suffering! The only description that I can give you, my father, is that it is beyond words.”\*

But suddenly all her sufferings ceased, without any apparent reason. This surprised her, and the devil took advantage of her trouble to endeavour to persuade her that her former state had been an illusion. She had recourse, however, to her heavenly Spouse, who hastened to console her, and by a fresh prodigy convinced her of the reality of His gifts. “This God of goodness,” said Anne Madeleine, “appeared to me, and to cure my

\* Account of Conscience.



incredulity, He imprinted upon my body the marks that I thought imaginary. A bright light came forth from His adorable wounds, and showed me upon my own hands the marks that were impressed within; this was made so clear to me that it would not be possible for me ever to have any doubt on the subject. I was then, however, in one of those raptures of which I have already spoken to you, reverend father, and I could not express in words the vision that I had. Nevertheless, I am much more certain of the truth of what I relate than if I had seen it with my exterior senses, which have indeed never been the medium of any of the communications of our Lord to me.”\*

These lines bear upon the surface evident marks of authenticity, and none the less convincing is the straightforward and candid language in which the facts are related. It is easy to see that Sœur Anne Madeleine had all the ordinary signs of extasy. Her exterior senses were suspended, the powers of her soul operated alone, whilst her intelligence, bathed in heavenly light, and her will inflamed with love, produced the high acts of unitive contemplation. Nothing, in these happy moments, to disturb the presence of God; nothing that was unworthy of the operation of Jesus, of the contact of His sacred wounds. Even the simple words that disclose, while they would fain veil, the mystery, if obedience permitted, give us glimpses of the serra-

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phic ardours that inflamed this favoured soul. These eminent graces were followed and crowned by all the effects which, according to the masters of mystical theology, always prove their truth. These effects were : a life ever increasing in holiness, as we shall soon show ; virtues, whose heroism it were difficult to contest ; high lights in the understanding concerning God ; a greater desire of humiliations, and a more profound contempt for the things of earth. And as the extatic, constrained by obedience, tells us, in her own truthful and touching words, of the virtue that came from the wounds of her Jesus, and of the marks, now glorious, now painful, with which He honoured her members, let us confidently accept her testimony, and give Anne Madeleine her own place among the stigmatized virgins.

Foremost in this glorious phalanx of stigmatized saints must ever stand St. Francis of Assisi. His stigmas differ from all the others, in that they were permanent until his death, and bore the likeness of the nails that pierced the feet and hands of the Saviour.\* Next to him ranks St. Catharine of Sienna. Our Lord appeared to her, and from the five openings of His sacred wounds He sent forth five bleeding rays, towards the hands, the feet, and the heart of the virgin. But she immediately asked that the wounds might not appear on the exterior,

\* S. Sarnelli, *Lettere ecclesiastiche*, t. iv., lett. 32. *Delle S. Stimate di S. Fr. di Assisi*.

and her prayer was granted; so that the rays, losing their bleeding appearance, became most brilliant, and pierced these five parts of her body, without any visible manifestation, but with the most intense pain to the victim.\* Other virgins who have been favoured with the stigmatas have also obtained from the divine Master that they should remain invisible to all eyes.† We know the alternative that was placed before Anne Madeleine, and what she chose in her disinterested zeal for the glory of her Spouse. For this reason we must not rank this courageous virgin among the servants of Christ who have been honoured with the visible and complete stigmatization, including the crown of thorns and the five wounds, as for instance, Louise Lateau, our celebrated contemporary of Belgium; but it is fitting to rank her a little lower, among those who have been favoured with the stigmatas in an incomplete degree, and invisible to all eyes, even to their own. This is, however, a very great glory, and alone in the whole Order of the Visitation was Sœur Anne Madeleine thus distinguished.

\* Raymond a Capua. *Vita S. Cathar. Senen.*, part II. c. 7. This fact gave occasion to a long controversy between the Franciscans and the Dominicans. It was only ended in 1630, by the authority of Urban VIII., who definitively recognised the stigmatization of the saint. S. Théophil. Raynaud, s. I. Op. t. xiii., *De stigmatismo sacro et profano*.

† Gorres cites them in his *Mystique divin*, t. II., c. 15.

All these admirable graces have prepared this great soul to contract a close and sublime union with the Divinity. Let us recall to mind the ardent charity, the burning desire, and the ineffable ties which unite the Word of God to His creature, and which the prophet celebrates in the Canticle of canticles. We are about to see the daydawn of these mysteries which will be fully revealed to us only in heaven. But here again let us hearken to the thrice happy soul who was the object of such high favours. "In my retreat of 1716," said she, "one day after the morning obedience, I had such a strong sense of the presence of God, that, unable to stand, I was compelled to kneel in order to admire this divine presence. At the same time I was penetrated with the glory that surrounds the throne of the majesty of God, and the splendour of this majesty filled me with reverence. Carried out of myself, as it were, and deprived of all natural feeling, I felt that this kind of exterior death prepared me to receive with less obstruction the benefits that were destined for me. It was then told me that the three adorable Persons of the Most Holy Trinity desired to contract a union with me that nothing should be able to break, and that for this they only awaited my consent. At this word of union I felt that all my being melted away, so to say, and was ready to flow into this immense Being. Astonishment and confusion culminated in a profound silence, wherein I consented to all. I

found voice at length to beg the three adorable Persons to ordain that my unworthiness should put no obstacle to the riches that They desired to dispense to me; and then I profoundly adored the abasements of a God, in the depths of the soul of a sinner. The knowledge that I received in my understanding concerning the adorable Persons was so sublime and profound that I have never been able to speak of it. I have always feared to lower the gift of God by my feeble expressions, knowing how inadequate they are to give a just idea of the greatness of His lights.

“After I had enjoyed these holy communications for two hours, I felt that the three divine Persons were about to withdraw Their sensible presence from me, and I earnestly begged of them to bless me. I had no sooner finished my prayer, than the Eternal Father gave me to understand that the blessing that He gave was that I should never lose the sense of His presence. The adorable Person of the Son made me see that, as He had chosen me to be the victim of His Sacred Heart, the blessing that He gave was, to open the treasures that It contains, and to have the right of disposing of them according to His good pleasure. Finally, the blessing that I received from the Holy Spirit was, that I should make continual progress in His love, and that grace should never be void in me. After this, the vision disappeared, and coming to myself, I felt like a new creature, and knew not how to

acknowledge worthily the gift of God. For several days I felt the impressions of this grace, and was, as it were, in an interior ravishment, which left me nothing to desire. This abundant blessing has been renewed in me several times, but more purely than the first time, wholly in the intensity of the soul, and the exterior senses completely excluded.”\*

In an immortal page, St. Teresa has told us of the effects produced in a soul by this mystical marriage. The first is a forgetfulness of herself, so that she truly seems no longer to exist; for she is affected in such a way, that she neither knows herself, nor remembers that there is either heaven, or life, or honour destined for her, being entirely engaged in seeking the glory of God, and hence it seems that the words spoken by our Lord have effected the work, viz., that she should mind His affairs, and that He would take care of hers.

The second effect of this life in Jesus Christ is a great desire to suffer; but there is no excitement nor uneasiness in this desire. What is more astonishing still, is that these souls are so inflamed with desire to serve God, of honouring His name, and of benefiting some soul, that they not only do *not* desire to die, but they wish to live many years, and to endure great sufferings, only too happy if they can thereby

\* Account of Conscience.

procure for the divine Master some of the praise that is due to Him.\*

It would be easy to prove that these effects were produced in the soul of Anne Madeleine, and to infer from them of the reality of the heavenly communications. Our Lord moreover granted her ardent prayer to suffer for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. He made her feel with fresh force the weight of the divine wrath against the sinners in whose place she stood in her character of victim. He gave her from time to time a view of the crimes of others that she had to expiate; and He made known to her the interior state of souls for whom it was her mission to pray. The irreparable loss of souls overwhelmed her. The thought of the glory of which they deprived God by their damnation touched her still more deeply, as we see in the following pages of her Account of Conscience. "However severe my Divine Master is to me," she wrote, "I nevertheless can never cease to trust Him always. It suffices to me to know that He is infinitely amiable to make me strive my utmost to love Him; it is He that I seek, and not His rewards. Oh, no; I do not fear His chastisements; what I fear is to displease Him. I suffer willingly, because my Saviour wishes it, and with all my heart I sacrifice my personal satisfaction to the accomplishment of His Divine Will. . . . There is no other

\* *The Interior Castle*, seventh mansion, c. 3.

way, my reverend father, of supporting the justice of God, which is exercised upon me. The weight of His indignation is ever crushing me more and more, and I can neither measure its effects nor its consequences. I am overwhelmed with the most intense grief, and I know not whether this proceeds from the horror of evil or from the desire of good. All that I know is, that my torments resemble those of the damned: hell indeed is filled with their impotent desires. . . . The sufferings of the body are nothing compared to those of a soul who feels herself in absolute desolation. In this state, the knowledge of what God is for Himself, and of what He is or has been for me, only serves to increase the bitterness of my grief, and to render me incapable of aught save the most painful suffering. Not even do I feel, reverend father, that content and joy which made me look upon a suffering state as the most worthy of the ambition of a creature; there is nothing in the past, present, or future, that does not pain me, but still these sufferings do not trouble me, nor do they apparently make me lose the tranquillity and submission that the soul preserves amidst all her agitations.

“The body, I must own, reverend father, falters at each step, under the pressure of the sharp pains that it has to bear. For some time past, God has added to these an impression of the pain that sin occasioned to Jesus Christ. Oh! how true it is



that the malice of sin is not known. God works a miracle when He enables a soul to bear this knowledge. I unceasingly implore Him to impart the knowledge that He has given me to the many souls who offend Him so recklessly. . . . I have been shown, dear father, an increase of suffering, in comparison with which all that I have suffered till now seems nothing. I was also made to feel it. For some days I have been in the most excessive pain and continual agony, owing to the vision that God has given me of His justice offended by the sins of men. It is His will that I should detest these sins. In the continual abandonment to which she is reduced, my soul can only reiterate these words : *'My God, my God, why hast Thou abandoned me ?'* . . . . Fever, cough, spitting of blood, oppressions, pain in the side, and the other sufferings of the body are nothing compared to the sufferings of the soul. Everything is filled with bitterness ; but how blessed it would be to breathe the last sigh under this painful operation !" . . . . "I do nothing but suffer," wrote she again at another time ; "the body and soul seem loaded, before God and before men, with the iniquities of many."

She said again : "I had entreated our mother to allow me to satisfy the ardent desire I feel to revenge upon myself the insults that are offered to the Sacred Heart of Jesus upon our altars ; but as she opposed my wishes, I asked God to grant me Himself that which men refused. Since then I

have had continual suffering, either in body or in mind ; and I have no doubt that God permitted this opposition on the part of my superior in order that He might be Himself my executioner. . . . I sometimes pass the three hours of the night in mortal agony, which is harder to bear than death. My abandonment is so great, that I can find nowhere the least vestige of consolation. Neither indeed do I wish for consolation, for my soul begins to accustom itself to the severest privations, almost without perceiving it. All that I can do is to suffer, and to suffer in every way without being able to extract the least consolation from my sufferings. I do not even desire this consolation from my God ; is it not the height of desolation, father, not to wish that God should return when He has abandoned one ?” “ Last night, in my most cruel sufferings,” wrote she to her mother, “ instead of calling God *good*, I was tempted to call Him *unjust*. And it seems to me that, instead of being horrified at these sentiments suggested by the spirit of darkness, I consent to them much more willingly than I acquiesced in good feelings when they were given me. It seems certain to me that God has willed my loss from all eternity, and that my name is effaced from the book of life. Everything seems to prove it to me. . . . The Lord continues to make me feel the severity of His justice by everything that is hardest and most bitter to the senses. . . . The nearness of the sacred mysteries

makes no impression on me. It seems to me that all that might be good in my actions is spoilt and lost, owing to my aversion to God, and to the doubts about faith that are suggested by the enemy; and these feelings seem to have become an intrinsic part of my very nature."

To her director she said again: "My interior agonies are so contrary to nature and to the senses, that it seems to me there is no death or torment that would not be preferable to a quarter of an hour in this state. I earnestly long to go out of my flesh, in order to be united at length to my God: this longing is so painful, that it would occasion death did not God powerfully uphold me."

She describes thus the excess of her desolation: "Obedience," said she, "having permitted me to follow the impulse of grace, by passing the night in prayer, the infinite mercy of my God was pleased to operate great things in me. I found myself all at once in an interior abandonment that cannot be expressed. But the more, however, that the powers of my soul were plunged in bitterness, so much the more did it cleave to God in its depths."\*

Bound in spirit to the altar of sacrifice, thus did Sœur Anne Madeleine share in the sufferings, and in the last agony of her Master. But this is not all; for amidst her martyrdom, adoration and praise must also find voice. For this end the Holy

\* Account of Conscience.

Spirit disposes her soul. Whilst on the surface it is given over to suffering and desolation, in its depths it is closely united to Him, and, overflowing with light and spiritual joy, it produces acts conformable to those that Jesus offered to His Father on the Cross, as foretold by David in the two psalms that we have analysed above. The following lines in her Account of Conscience set forth in a striking manner her likeness to her divine Master in this respect.

“In the middle of the night a great change took place in me. It seemed to me that I was presented before the throne of the Three Persons of the adorable Trinity, and that our divine Jesus invited me to repose on His breast, discovering to me its hidden mysteries in an admirable manner; then, presenting me to His Father, He said: ‘Holy Father, bless this victim that I have chosen for Myself, and since she participates in My sufferings, let her share also in My glory!’ At the same moment I found myself surrounded, and, as it were, penetrated with this glory. . . .”

“On the eve of the day on which I was to go into retreat,” wrote she in 1724, “it seemed to me, during the evening prayer, that God opened to me His bosom, inviting me to enter therein, in order to receive all in Him, so that in losing myself, I might be more fitted to receive all in Him. I saw myself then like to dirty water that is thrown into the sea, and that a moment afterwards cannot be

distinguished from the sea itself. Having thus become, as it were, one thing with my God, but this in a much more simple and an infinitely purer manner than any that I have experienced until now, I was, as it were, filled with the knowledge of God in His own knowledge. I saw Him as a Being infinitely perfect, solely occupied with Himself and His adorable perfections, finding in Himself the sole source of His felicity, and unable to receive any perfect homage from His creature save only that which He renders to Himself in her. This homage appeared to be formed in me in a manner worthy of Him, and without my having contributed to it in the least degree. Do not ask me, father, what took place ; it was neither light, nor taste, nor a suffering, nor a full joy ; but God Himself, such as He is, and in so far as He can be received in a vile creature.”\*

The reader can here form a complete idea of Sœur Anne Madeleine. We may apply to this beautiful soul what St. Denys the Areopagite said of his master, Hierothée : it was given to her to appreciate divine things, not only by understanding, but also by feeling them, and it was by this likeness to Jesus that she was consummated in the mystical union.† We may also, in the language of St. John Chrysostom, designate her as a crucified virgin, detached from the things of earth, and

\* Account of Conscience.

† *De Nom. D<sup>eu</sup>. c. II.*

looking upward to heaven.\* Finally, we may rank her among those apostolic virgins, followers of the virginal associate of the divine sacrifice, whose prayers and austerities have no other end in view than the accomplishment of the desires of the Heart of Jesus Christ.

\* *Exposit.* in Psal. xliv.

## CHAPTER V.

## The Sacred Heart.

"Et effundam super domum David, et super habitores Jerusalem, spiritum gratiæ et precum; et aspicient ad me quem confixerunt.—And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced."—*Zach. xii. 10.*;

When Jesus had expired, from His side, opened by the lance, came forth the Church with the blood and water of the Redemption.\*

The opened side, the pierced heart of her royal Spouse was the cradle of the Church, that glorious and spotless Bride of Christ asleep upon the Cross.† Could she ever forget so noble an origin? Could she ever cease for one single instant to contemplate, to love, to kiss the bleeding wound that gave her exit? Ah, no! she has it ever before her eyes, and the sight of this wounded Heart makes even her exile sweet. The remembrance of the pierced side of Jesus transports the martyrs and inflames the virgins; it inspires the doctors; it inebriates souls who, like St. John, lean upon the divine breast in the feast of the

\* Joan. xix. 34.

† Ephes. v. 27.

Eucharist.\* Such was the dawn of the beautiful devotion, whose ever-increasing growth we now witness. Going back to the middle ages, we there soon meet with interior souls who, gazing in spirit on the opened Heart of Jesus, found in It the perfection of love,† and leaning upon the very breast of Christ, drew thence their life of grace, and tasted the divine nature that makes virtue sweet.‡ In the cloister, especially, devotion to the Sacred Heart found voice in accents of love and praise. In her holy home, Gertrude sang this beautiful hymn: "Joy and praise be to Thee, O Jesus, for Thy divine Heart, that love has pierced for me even in death! Joy and praise be to Thee in this most loving Heart, which was opened to me by the lance, in order that my heart might enter and repose therein! Joy and praise be to Thee in this most sweet Heart, my sole refuge in my exile; this Heart so full of tender solicitude for me, so athirst in Its love for me, that It will never rest until It has received me into Itself for all eternity!"§ These songs are but the prelude to other praises; but yet, nevertheless, even in the time of

\* See Euseb. *Ep. Martyr. Lugdunem.*; Tertull. *de Baptism.*, c. 16, et *de Anima*, c. 43; Cypr. *de Monte Sinai et Sion*; Ambros. in Ps. xlv. et in Ps. cxviii., Serm. 1 and 3; *de Spir. Sanct.*, lib. II. c. 5; Chrys. *Hom. in omnib. Martyr.*; Aug. Tract. cxx. in Joan., etc., etc. See also l'Abbé Bongaud, *Histoire de la B. Marguerite Marie*, c. 7.

† Cathar. Senen, Dialog. xxvi.

‡ Cathar. Senen, Dialog. xcvi.

§ S. Gertrude, Exerc. vi., trans. by Dom Guéranger,



the great Benedictine Abbess, we cannot say that the Heart of our Lord was honoured with a special worship, whose doctrinal expression and liturgical form were consecrated by the Church. This grace was reserved for the latter times. In the design of Providence it was to be granted to us when charity would seem to be extinguished, so that souls might be inflamed from the very Fount of Love; when the perils of the Church should have become imminent; so that, when standing at bay as it were, and surrounded by her enemies, the Church might take refuge in the very Heart from whence she came; when, in fine, social apostasy should be on the point of consummation, in order that a reparation that should be truly worthy, and consistent with this great crime of Christian peoples, should be offered to the Heart of Jesus Christ, and through this immolated Heart to the Majesty of God. These times are now arrived; and to-day, through the impulse of the Spirit from whom grace flows, and through whom we pray, the nations lift their eyes to the Heart that they have pierced by their offences.\*

Blessed Margaret Mary, the apostle of the Sacred Heart, in the admirable vision that she had on the Feast of the Visitation, in the year 1688, prophesied through what instruments God would extend throughout the entire world the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

\* Zach. xii. 10.

"I was shewn," said she, "an elevated, spacious, and most beautiful place, in the centre of which was a throne of flames, in which was the sweet Heart of Jesus, from whose wound proceeded such ardent and brilliant rays that the whole place was illumined and warmed thereby. On one side was the Blessed Virgin, on the other our Father St. Francis, with the holy Father de la Colombière; the daughters of the Visitation also were there, with their guardian angels by their side, each of whom held in his hand a heart. The Blessed Virgin invited us by these maternal words: 'Come, my beloved daughters, draw nigh, for I wish to make you the guardians of this precious treasure that was formed by the divine Sun of Justice in the virginal earth of my heart, wherein He lay hid for nine months: afterwards He manifested Himself to men who, knowing Him not, despised Him, because they beheld Him mingled with and covered with their earth, in which the Eternal Father had thrown all the filth and corruption of their sins: these sins He expiated for thirty-three years in the fire of His charity; but seeing that men, far from enriching themselves, and appreciating so precious a treasure according to the ends for which it was given to them, have endeavoured, on the contrary, to annihilate and exterminate it from the face of the earth, the Eternal Father, by an excess of mercy, has made even their malice conduce to enrich

them still more with this precious gold ; and by the blows they gave Him in His Passion, He has made of it priceless money, stamped with His Divinity, in order that with it they may pay their debts, and negotiate the great business of their eternal salvation.'

"This Queen of Goodness, continuing to address the daughters of the Visitation, said, showing them this divine Heart: 'Behold this divine Treasure, which is particularly manifested to you by the tender love that my Son has for your institute, which He looks upon and loves as His dear Benjamin, whom He wishes therefore to benefit above all the others. The members of this institute must not only enrich themselves with this inexhaustible Treasure ; they must also, as far as they can, abundantly distribute this precious money, and endeavour to enrich all the world without fear of its failing them, for the more they take from it the more will they yet find to take.'

"Turning then to the good Père de la Colombe, this Mother of goodness said to him : 'You also, faithful servant of my divine Son, you have a great part in this divine treasure ; for if it is given to the daughters of the Visitation to make it known and loved, and to distribute it to others, it is reserved for the fathers of the Society to make known its usefulness and priceless value, in order that souls may profit by it, and may receive

it with the respect and gratitude due to so great a benefit. In proportion as they please Him in this manner, this divine Heart, the fruitful source of blessings and graces, will pour them forth so abundantly on the functions of their ministry, that they will produce fruits beyond their efforts and hopes, and will assure the salvation and perfection of each one of them in particular.' \*\*

The design of Providence is in part explained to us in this marvellous vision. First, it is seen that she who had assisted at the opening of the Heart of Jesus on Calvary, receives the mission of manifesting this divine Heart to souls. Next we learn that two great religious orders are chosen to be the principal instruments for the propagation of the new devotion.

Scarcely has the grave closed over Blessed Margaret Mary ere the work commences. Souls hasten to consecrate themselves to the Sacred Heart, and to gain others to it. Altars and confraternities arise on all sides in its honour. Popes Innocent XII., Clement XI., and Benedict XIII. enrich these latter with great privileges and precious indulgences. The Feast of the Sacred Heart began also to be kept on the day set apart by our Lord, the Friday after the octave of the Blessed Sacrament. After twenty years of pious efforts the worship of the Heart of Jesus had

\* Letter of Blessed Margaret Mary to Mère de Saumaise, July, 1688.

spread from monastery to monastery, from confraternity to confraternity, and penetrating even into the most remote parts, had circulated throughout France.\*

But other marvels were hidden in the designs of Providence. The end of the devotion to the Sacred Heart was not only the renewal of individual souls; it was intended also to bring back the nations to Christ. This is why we see in it two characteristic forms: a moral form, which concerns individuals, and a social form which has reference to the life of Catholic nations.†

This last assertion is easily proved. After our Lord had discovered to Blessed Margaret Mary the riches that His Heart destined for souls, He honoured her with a final and important communication, which took place on the Feast of the Sacred Heart in 1689, and was the climax of the great revelations which the virgin of Paray was commissioned to reveal to the world.

In an admirable vision, the Heart of Jesus shewed itself to the blessed one as the powerful protector of France, to avert the just anger of God, and the abundant and inexhaustible source of grace and mercy. He taught her that He

\* See the R. P. Daniel, S.J., *Hist. de la B. Marguerite Marie*, c. 29.

† See the R. P. Roux., S.J., *The social end of the devotion to the Sacred Heart*; Sermon at Brussels in favour of the work of the Sanctuary of the Sacred Heart, 20th April, 1876,

wished to enter with pomp and magnificence into the houses of kings and princes, that He might be there honoured as much as He had been outraged, despised, and humiliated in His Passion; and that He might receive as much pleasure in seeing them bowed down and humbled before Him, as He felt bitterness when He beheld Himself trodden under their feet. Our Lord then ordered His faithful servant to tell the eldest son of His Sacred Heart, that is to say, the King of France, that He wished the representation of His Heart to be painted on the standards, and engraved on the arms of the nation; and that an edifice was to be erected which should contain the image of this Sacred Heart, to receive the consecration and the homage of the sovereign and his court. At this price our Lord promised to become the powerful protector of the country, and that He would make the king victorious and triumphant over his own enemies and those of the Holy Church. Almost in these words Blessed Margaret Mary intimated to her country the wishes of the divine Master, in three admirable letters that she addressed to Mère de Saumaise, one of the most zealous souls in the Order of the Visitation.\*

Let us set forth the nature, the meaning, and the bearing of this revelation. Numerous proofs,

\* They are dated the 25th February, the 17th June, and in the month of August, 1689, and are printed in the second volume of the works of the blessed one,

that it is unnecessary to bring forward since the beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary, allow us to rank the virgin of Paray le Monial amongst those virgins who have prophesied, and who have been met with in the Church from the beginning.\* The revelation which she received, and which she transmitted to us through the intermedium of Mère de Saumaise, bears about it all the marks of certainty, and can therefore be looked upon as a private divine revelation. These kind of revelations, as is known, form no part of the deposit of the faith, and are not to be believed by a divine or Catholic act of faith. Nevertheless, those to whom they are addressed fulfil a praiseworthy act, and even sometimes a duty, in receiving them with simple human faith; and in obeying their mandates when they bear about them sufficient marks for belief. Such is, properly speaking, the revelation that we are considering; it is the expression of a desire of the Heart of Jesus Christ: an invitation of this loving Heart to the Sovereign of France, and even indirectly to the whole of France. Had the great king but hearkened to this voice from on high, he would undoubtedly have prepared a much happier fate for the French nation than subsequently befel her.

What is, in fact, the meaning of these words that fell from the lips of Christ? The Heart of Jesus

\* Act. xxi. 9.

wills to become the powerful protector of France, and that the image of this Heart should adorn the standards and the arms of the eldest daughter of the Church, in order that her arms may be victorious over the enemies of His name. This divine Heart demands that a sanctuary be raised to it, as a material sign of the consecration of the country; and by this the divine Master gives to the devotion of which His Heart is the object, in addition to its moral form which concerns the life of souls, a social form which has reference to the life of the French nation. He gives the people who are so dear to Him a new, admirable, and supernatural means of surmounting the naturalism which is the great wound of modern times. He gives them a new power, whereby they may resume their providential mission, the defence of the cause of God in the world. The strict duty of every human society, and especially of France, is to acknowledge the royalty of Christ, and of the Church, to whom all the nations were given as an inheritance. This sacred royalty is already publicly ignored by virtue of the treaty of Westphalia; social apostasy is near its consummation, and a divorce about to be declared between the Church and the state, between the supernatural order and the temporal order. This then is the opportune time God has chosen wherein to offer to France, in the devotion to the Sacred Heart, a new instrument of salvation and of victory. Let us conse-



quently distinguish between duty and this new, extraordinary, and superogatory means whereby to fulfil it faithfully and gloriously. The strict duty of France was to remain Christian as a nation ; she is bound to remember her baptism, to return to Christ, and to resume her mission of protector of the Church. The means that her children are at liberty to adopt are the moral and social devotion of the nation, and of individual souls, to the Sacred Heart. This devotion, that was sent down to France from heaven, was communicated to her by a virgin in a marvellous manner. Many instances of the same kind, showing the special protection of Providence, are recorded in the pages of the history of the Franks. If this last and most supernatural aid is accepted, it would seem, according to the promises of Christ, that the eldest daughter of the Church will be victorious at once over her own enemies, and over those of the Church ; they are indeed one and the same. In other words, it seems probable that the French nation, remembering the baptismal font of Rheims, will resume her providential and historical mission, that of the protector of the Catholic faith throughout the entire world.

But, inebriated with prosperity, the King of France took no notice of the virgin of Paray, nor of the message of the divine Heart, if, as was most likely, it ever reached him. Is then the word of Christ to be in vain ? Harken to what God says

in Scripture : "As the rain and snow come down from heaven, and return no more thither, but water the earth to make it fruitful, so My word which goeth forth from My mouth shall not return to Me void, but shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it."\* Thus shall it be with the word of Jesus. Slighted by the great ones, it is treasured by the humble of heart. Transmitted from soul to soul, it works slowly but surely; and now, after the lapse of nearly two centuries, it is loudly re-echoed in this most opportune moment. For since the proclamation of the false principles of 1789, the official state of modern nations is a state of social revolt against Christ and against the Church. The divine King of the nations is ignored by the public powers, and driven out from the midst of society. Just as in the time of the Passion, the authorities of the earth humiliated and condemned Jesus, so there are governments now who humiliate and even condemn Him in the persons of His representatives. How wisely has Providence ordained that the invitation of Jesus should be heard by the souls of our times, in order that from the midst of the pious multitudes, a protestation of fidelity and a cry of reparation should rise up to the offended Heart of Christ, to protest against the social apostasy, and the crimes of divine high treason with which the whole earth is soiled. This is the

\* Isa. lv. 10 and 11.

explanation of the public prayers, of the pilgrimages to Paray-le-Monial, of the consecration of towns and provinces to the Heart of Christ, and of the building of sanctuaries in Its honour, which we now witness. It is the commencement of the realization of the prophecy of Margaret Mary, when she exclaimed: "It will reign, this loving Heart, in spite of Satan and his emissaries."\*. It is the prelude to the restoration of the social reign of Jesus Christ. The souls of the people, prostrated at the feet of the King, are making reparation to Him for their infidelity, and in the blood of an immolated Heart they are consolidating a new alliance with Him!

In proportion as the result is great, so is it interesting to study the divine ways that lead up to it; among these Anne Madeleine occupies an important place. In order to show all that a nation has a right to expect from His Heart, Christ looked with an especial love upon a town that was to be the central organ for the propagation of the new devotion, and that was about to consecrate itself to this adorable Heart, giving thus an example to the rest of France, and even to the whole world. Marseilles was this chosen town. In it once dwelt her who had loved Jesus much,† and who had stood by the Cross when the Heart of the Saviour was

\* Letter of 17th June, 1699, cited above.

† Luc. vii. 47.

‡ Joan. xix. 25.

opened by the lance.† Here also he whom Jesus loved\* held his see, whence he dispensed the doctrine of divine charity.† It was then in this town of Magdalen and of Lazarus, that Jesus now chose for Himself two instruments; the one, who should work openly in the face of the world, who was the Bishop; the other and hidden instrument, the humble Visitandine whose life we write. The bishop will carry out the orders of Heaven, the Visitandine will transmit to him the inspirations she receives from on high. This will be the immortal glory of Sœur Anne Madeleine de Rémusat.

In order to mark the connection between her mission and that of the virgin of Paray, and to show that she was to be the successor of this zealous apostle of the interests of His Heart, Christ revealed His designs to her on the 17th October, 1713, which was the twenty-third anniversary of the death of Margaret Mary. On that day, as she affirms in one of her letters, *He made known to her, in a particular and extraordinary way, His designs upon her concerning the glory of His adorable Heart.*‡ This letter to her new director, Père Girard, is dated the 14th October, 1721, and was therefore written before the consecration of the

\* Joan. xi. 3, 5, 35.

† The Roman martyrology favours the tradition of Marseilles concerning the episcopacy of St. Lazarus. It is also implicitly favoured by the Bollandists on the 22nd July.

‡ Letter of Sœur Anne Madeleine, quoted in her life, c. 6.

town of Marseilles to the Sacred Heart. Although she does not further explain herself, it seems to us evident that she is here alluding to the great event in which she took such an important and supernatural part, and which more than others contributed to the glory of the divine Heart. Thus the beloved virgin of Jesus, the second Margaret Mary, knew beforehand, as Monseigneur de Belzunce affirms, in one of his letters,\* the magnificent design of the Saviour, regarding the town of Marseilles, the first town that was consecrated to His loving Heart. Perhaps, indeed, was it vouchsafed to her to behold in extatic vision, the yet grander design of which this was but the preparation, the act of consecration of the faithful of the entire Catholic universe, with their glorious Pontiff, Pius IX., to the Heart of the Man-God.

All the ways of God are sweet and admirable. In order that Anne Madeleine may be able to carry out her mission, it is necessary, first, that she should herself have been prepared for it; and next, that those to whom she is to transmit the mandates of Heaven, may be disposed to believe her. The interior preparation of the pious victim of Jesus was completed in the trials that we have recorded. The divine Master will soon shed a halo around her apostolic zeal and her other virtues, in order that her superiors and above all the Bishop of

\* Letter to Mère de Gréard, to which we shall refer later on.

Marseilles, may acknowledge her to be the messenger of the word of the Sacred Heart.

The influence of Sœur Anne Madeleine over her companions had become most considerable towards the end of her novitiate, and thenceforward the pious Visitandine seemed to be invested with a real mission towards souls. It was an ever-increasing influence; all were attracted by the fragrance of her virtues, she won hearts to God by a heavenly charm.

Recognizing in the soul of her spiritual daughter the action of the Holy Spirit, Mère Nogaret now gave the entry of the monastery parlour to such of the devout who might wish to converse with Sœur Anne Madeleine, in order to learn from her how to love the Heart of Jesus. Although she would have preferred to remain at the foot of the tabernacle, hidden in the obscurity of the cloister, the ardent apostle of the Sacred Heart listened to the voice of obedience, which called her to work in the garden of her Spouse.\* A great number availed themselves of this advantage to their souls; and to all who heard her, Anne Madeleine communicated the new devotion. It had been established in the first monastery of the Visitation since the year 1695, when it was first brought there, five years after the death of Blessed Margaret Mary, under the superiorship of Mère Louise Dorothee de Capel, who was an

\* See Cant. v. 1.

ardent apostle of the Sacred Heart. In that year the Feast of the Sacred Heart was first kept on the day appointed by the divine Master, the first Friday after the octave of the Blessed Sacrament; and Mass in its honour was celebrated by M. de Forester, the provost of the cathedral. From that time, devotion to the Sacred Heart had gone on increasing in the monastery under the government of the superiors who succeeded Mère de Capel, especially Mères Gravier and Nogaret; but to Sœur Anne Madeleine was reserved the honour of giving it a precise form, and its due amount of glory: she also was the means of spreading it abroad.

To this end she exercised her influence, not only in her discourses, but likewise in her correspondence, which became very large. No trace can be discovered of some of her letters, which were collected by the first mothers of the Visitation, but we hope that the others will be found in time. Meanwhile, the only idea we can form of them is from the testimony of Monseigneur de Belzunce. According to him, Madeleine wrote well and with ease, and her style was full of unction. She expressed herself intelligibly on the highest subjects, and the Spirit of God was manifest in all her writings. By means of this vast correspondence, she kept up a close intimacy with a considerable number of eminent souls, both in the Order of the Visitation and elsewhere. All these beautiful

souls communicated one to the other their ardent longings for the glory of the Sacred Heart, and their noble efforts to extend devotion to It.\*

Monseigneur de Belzunce in particular professed the 'greatest veneration for his beloved spiritual daughter. He has left us a portrait of her, which we will endeavour to retrace in these pages. His esteem for her shone forth especially on one occasion, when our Lord showed that He had made her the medium between Himself and souls that were consecrated to His service. The Prince of Shepherds constituted the humble Visitandine His messenger to one of the chief shepherds of His flock; and the message was a message of peace, which greatly contributed to the perfection of his soul, and rendered him worthy to consecrate his diocese to the Heart of his God.

Notwithstanding his lively faith and deep piety, the great Bishop of Marseilles did not celebrate Mass daily at that time. The reason for this abstention was not known. Sœur Anne Madeleine was ignorant of the fact, but our Lord revealed it to her, and enjoined her to tell the pious bishop that His Heart was grieved thereby. It is easy to imagine what it must have cost the poor sister to execute such an order, but her will was in God, and accustomed to set aside her own feelings in everything, she resolved to obey at once.

\* Letter from Monseigneur de Belzunce to Mère de Gréard, Vie, etc., c. 6.



Some days afterwards, Monseigneur de Belzunce asked for her in the parlour. She came, and prostrating herself at his feet, she humbly repeated to him the words of our Lord. The venerable prelate listened to her in astonishment, then, wishing to put her humility to the test, and to still further embellish her sacrifice, he assumed a severe aspect, and pretended to be surprised that she should dare to lecture her bishop, prompted probably by her own imagination. The sister listened in silence, and humiliated herself at the feet of her father. The Bishop went away, resolved to obey the wishes of heaven; the next day and the following days he celebrated the Holy Sacrifice. Our Lord delayed not to make this known to His faithful spouse, commissioning her to tell the Bishop that His Heart was now consoled and satisfied. This fresh order was received by the angelic nun as the former one had been received by her; without any regard for her own pain or humiliation. Soon honoured by another visit from the pious bishop, she told him that he had consoled the divine Heart. The beautiful soul of the bishop was filled with the purest joy at this news. It prepared him to receive through the same channel a far more important communication.

Meanwhile, a fresh way of exercising her apostolic zeal awaited Anne Madeleine. For some time Mère Nogaret had thought of entrusting her with the direction of the school, but she had been

deterred by the state of health of the poor sister, and also by the little harmony that the new employment would have with the interior life of the sister. But her hesitation was at length vanquished by the entreaties of several of the most distinguished inhabitants of the town, who were anxious that the education of their daughters should be placed under the direction of the sister. This charge was therefore laid upon Anne Madeleine. She accepted it through obedience, and gave herself up to it unreservedly, hiding from the eyes of all the immense natural repugnance that she felt for her new duties.

Her entry into the school was hailed by the young pupils with inexpressible joy. The bright vivacious mind of their young mistress, and the charm of her conversation, soon won their young affections, and they turned towards her as tender flowers turn to the light. To her maternal heart they brought all their joys and sorrows; they told her their interior trials, and of the sweet impressions of grace in their souls. Their hearts lay open before her, for she possessed in a high degree the gift of discernment of spirits. She enlightened them in their doubts, pointing out the right path to them; and prepared them to discern their vocation, helping them to overcome temptations and obstacles of all kinds, and to courageously correspond with the calls of grace.

To consolidate her work, she gave her pupils

each day a meditation full of life and unction : and which was proportioned to their young minds. Once a year she gave them a retreat, and renewed their fervour by her pious and solid exhortations. She did not omit either to well prepare her children for the reception of the Sacraments, and she made them give her an account of their pious practices and of their progress in virtue. When they were discouraged, she lifted them up ; she stimulated their zeal for study if they flagged ; when they were ill she watched by their bedside with the devotion of a mother. It was not surprising, therefore, that after some months of this government, submission, silence, modesty, recollection, and a great ardour for study, reigned throughout the school. The clever mistress had satisfied the general expectation.\*

From this time forward her reputation for sanctity and her influence were considerably increased. A number of persons of distinction expressed a great desire to see her, in order that they might be inflamed by her with love for the Heart of whom she spoke as would an apostle. It was really a most astonishing movement, prompted by Providence. She however, though still so young, was far from attributing any merit to herself. On the contrary, she looked to God alone, and in the ardour of her zeal she neglected no opportunity of gaining adorers for the Heart of

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 8.

Jesus. Inspired by the divine Master, she conceived the project of forming for Him a guard of honour, who should surround His tabernacle, and be to Him a rampart against the attacks of His enemies, offering Him their homage of love, praise, and reparation.

Monseigneur de Belzunce fully approved of the plan, and allowed her to draw up the rules of the pious association. Mère Nogaret seconded the project. Rome was applied to, and Pope Clement XI. issued a Bull, conceding great indulgences, which was dated the 30th August, 1717. Finally, a little book containing the rules of the new confraternity, with a notice on the origin of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and on the motives and practices of this devotion, was printed at the instigation of Sœur de Rémusat, with the approval of the bishop. It was dated 30th August, 1718.\* As soon as the erection of this confraternity was proclaimed, the opposition that it had met with at first was forgotten, and multitudes came from all parts to be enrolled under the banner of the Sacred Heart. So great was the enthusiasm, that it became necessary to appoint some of the sisters to take down in the parlours of the monastery the names of the many who desired to join. From that time also, the pious associates began to frequent with great assiduity the meetings which were held in the chapel of the "Grandes Maries."

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 6.

Every Friday, from five in the morning until six in the evening, might they be seen following each other in succession to surround the Heart of the Divine King with adoration and homage. Their principal occupation was to spread around them the knowledge and love of the Sacred Heart, and they edified the whole town by their zeal and piety. Thus did they erect at Marseilles the strongest barrier against the Jansenism that was there rife. In fine, their number increased in a few years to nigh thirty thousand: it might indeed have been thought that the time had arrived in which divine Providence had decreed to open to the faithful the riches of the Heart of Jesus.\*

The zeal of Sœur Anne Madeleine increased in proportion to the consolation she experienced at the sight of the complete success of her work. Marseilles no longer sufficed to her. She enrolled in her confraternity the populations of the towns and adjoining villages. Her influence was also exercised afar. Many indications seem to show that the pious lover of the Sacred Heart was in communication with Mère Marie Agnès de Gréard, the superior of the first monastery of the Visitation at Rouen.† These two souls were worthy of each other, for great was the sympathy between them.

\* Circular of the first monastery of the Visitation of Marseilles, 4th July, 1728.

† *Vis*, etc., c. 6. The circumstance is given indeed as a certainty, but without any formal proofs that it was so.

One day the divine Master appeared to Mère de Gréard, and showed her His Heart. This Heart opened Itself before her; she entered into It, and it was given to her to penetrate deeply into Its recesses. On recovering from this extasy, she was all inflamed, and she became one of the most zealous apostles of the Sacred Heart in France.\* Such was the probable friend, certainly the admirer of Sœur Anne Madeleine. When, after the death of the latter, the Jansenists were attacking her memory, Mère Marie Agnés wrote to Monseigneur de Belzunce, and drew from him the admirable reply in which, praising Anne Madeleine, he renders her the most beautiful homage that she could receive.†

But to return to Sœur de Rémusat. Thanks to her energy and influence, the new devotion was carried beyond seas. Owing to her, a confraternity of the Sacred Heart was established and flourished at Cairo. It reached even the capital of Islamism, and some years later, Constantinople was endowed

\* Short notice on the virtues of the Mère de Gréard, deceased at Rouen in 1741; Circulars of the first monastery of the Visitation of Rouen, of 25th November, 1726, the 9th February, 1730, the 3rd February, 1731, 25th June, 1733, and 14th April, 1735. These documents, important in the history of devotion to the Sacred Heart, were communicated to us by the Visitation of Rouen, to whom we here offer our sincere thanks.

† We do not know the text of the letter of Mère de Gréard. The minute is not to be found either in the monastery of Rouen or in that of Marseilles.

with a like confraternity. In fine, when her death came, she had, directly or indirectly, inculcated the devotion to the Sacred Heart to sixty thousand souls.

Her activity was prodigious. She spread about everywhere writings in honour of the Sacred Heart, and she visited by letter those places where she could not in person exercise her faithful apostolate. We will quote two passages of her correspondence, which throw an admirable light on the spirit proper to the new devotion. They are as follows: "I think," wrote she to an apostolic man to whom she sent her beloved little book, "that this book will help you, reverend father, to know how ardently the adorable Heart of Jesus longs to make for Himself a number of friends on whom He can depend, and who, by their love and fidelity, will make up to Him in some measure for the injuries that He receives, for the most part from hearts who ought to be devoted to Him. I shudder in thinking of them, and I could not bear the sight if our good Master did not make me hope that by means of this confraternity, which He Himself deigned to suggest to me, He will gain faithful adorers who will serve Him in spirit and in truth. Alas! father, how small is the number! . . . I see a multitude of souls who seem to be for God, yet who, most of them, grow slack in the services which they render Him, and thus oblige God to be reserved towards them. It seems

to me, reverend father, that, as I have often dared to say, God would not be able, so to speak, to refuse Himself to a soul who would give itself to Him without any reserve."

She wrote to a nun who had asked her, in the name of the Heart of Jesus, for some advice for her soul: "You will always be well received, dear sister, when you present yourself under the auspices of the Heart of Jesus. Unless you had done so, I should have been obliged to adhere to my resolution not to write any more letters. You will receive, along with the card of association, the little book which will instruct you in the obligations of the associates. The first is to give their whole heart to that of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that they may atone, by their adoration and homage, for the indignities that He receives in the adorable Eucharist. The principal view that I had in asking for the establishment of this association was to procure for the Sacred Heart of our good Master a number of souls who might atone to Him especially for the ingratitude that He finds in most of the hearts that are consecrated to Him, and to whose insults He is therefore more sensitive. It is then to the associates that He seems to say, as to the apostles: 'Will you also abandon Me?' or with Job: 'You who are My friends have pity on Me!' He complains through His prophet that no one comes to console Him in His sorrow at being abandoned, and that no one condoles with Him.



But henceforward there will be found some who will listen to His complaints and will sympathize with Him in His grief. I wish, dear sister, that I could explain my sentiments on the advantages that I discern in this association. It vexes me not to be able to express myself so strongly as I could wish on a subject which is so immeasurably dear to me."

These lines show us, among other things, how intensely grieved was the victim of Jesus, on account of the offences committed against this wounded Heart by certain souls who are consecrated to Him either in the priesthood or by vows. We quote from another of her letters a few lines which testify to the greatness of her aspirations:

"Your letters," wrote she to a person in whom she had great confidence, "are a real source of consolation to me, especially when they tell me that the number of the adorers of the Sacred Heart is increasing. My only desire, I assure you, is to see this divine Heart honoured to the fullest extent, according as He has given me to see is fitting: to this end nothing less would suffice than the establishment throughout the Church of a Feast in honour of the Sacred Heart, which would be observed as solemnly as is the Feast in honour of the Sacred Body of Jesus Christ. After this, there would be nothing to detain me on earth, and I should say willingly with St. Simeon: 'Now, O Lord, Thou canst let my soul depart in peace,

since it has seen the accomplishment of Thy promises.' "

"When," said she a little later, "when will this divine Heart receive from the whole Church the worship that It awaits? Go on praying and asking our Lord to extend throughout the whole earth the reign of His Sacred Heart. Would that I could contribute to this by my own destruction! With all my heart would I say: 'Let Him reign, and let me perish!' The delay of this reign affects me to an extent that I cannot describe, but which conduces towards the death and destruction of my whole being."\*

To all the gifts that the Sacred Heart of Jesus had given to Sœur Anne Madeleine was now added another gift, most useful in the carrying out of her mission. Monseigneur de Belzunce tells us, in his letter to the Visitation, that she had at times a clear and distinct knowledge of future things, and he alludes to singular favours and to supernatural lights that were truly marvellous.† Several occurrences showed the truth of this wonderful gift. On one occasion Anne Madeleine revealed to a nun of the monastery the state of her soul, and the graces that God reserved for her.

M. de Rémusat was at one time exceedingly anxious on account of not having heard for a considerable time from his son, who superintended

\* These Letters are printed in her *Life*, c. 8.

† Letter quoted already.

one of his houses in the Levant. He came to his daughter for consolation. She comforted him by foretelling to him the exact date when he would receive a letter from his son, and the event proved the truth of the prediction. A missionary apostolic of Georgia came to recommend to her prayers his far off flock, who were menaced by the greatest evils at the hands of an idolatrous prince who was the sworn enemy of religion. Anne Madeleine prostrated herself at the foot of the tabernacle, imploring the conversion of the prince, and offering herself as a victim to suffer in her soul and body the necessary expiation. But the measure of the crimes of the prince was filled, and his tragical end approached. Only to console His faithful spouse, our Lord announced to her the advent of a more just successor, who would protect the Christians. This news was communicated to the missionary, who returned to his mission, and wrote some months after that the prediction had been verified to the letter.\*

Let us here end our study of the virtues and influence of Sœur Anne Madeleine, in order to give our attention to the event predestined by God to be one of the greatest importance in the history of the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

• *Vie, etc., c. 8.*

## CHAPTER VI.

## The Plague of Marseilles.

"Et abiit primus, et effudit phialam suam in terram; et actum est vulnus saevum et pessimum.—And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a sore and grievous wound."—*Apoc.* xvi. 2.

Devotion to the Heart of Jesus, as we have already said, bears about it not only a moral but also a social form. In freely consecrating themselves to this adorable Heart, towns and populations acknowledge the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. They also acquire an efficacious means of drawing down upon themselves the divine protection, and of restoring social Christian life in its full plenitude, so impaired in these latter times by the radical and complete separation of Church from State. This is an admirable design of God, and, in the language of St. Denis the Areopagite, it is one of His sweetest and best providences.\*

Marseilles, the city of Lazarus, gave the example to all the other cities of the world; she was the first to consecrate herself to the Heart of Jesus

\* De Div., Nom., c. III., 1.

Christ. All was now ready. God had completed the formation of the two principal instruments of His action. Anne Madeleine in the shades of the cloister, Monseigneur de Belzunce in the splendour of the episcopal throne, were, each in their respective sphere, prepared to second the Divine purpose. Still did God hold in reserve, amid the treasures of His justice, which likewise include His love, a terrible scourge, which was to open the eyes of all, and subject their hearts and wills to the Heart of the divine King.

Inebriated by her prosperity, Marseilles was being corrupted. Offences against the Divinity were daily multiplied, and dissolute morals reigned supreme. The rich and influential set the example, and they were imitated as usual by the inferior classes. The great mass of the inhabitants were entirely possessed by the love of pleasure and luxury, and thirst for gain. To crown all, the poison of Jansenism was secretly filtering among the clergy and the religious orders, wounding thus yet more deeply the Heart of our Lord.\*

Sœur Anne Madeleine was chosen to announce to her fellow-citizens that the measure of their crimes was full, and that divine justice was about to visit them, unless they repented of their mis-

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 9. See in the works of Monseigneur de Belzunce, published by the Abbé Janffret, t. I., his mandate of 30th July, 1720, ordering public prayers and a general fast, to appease the anger of heaven.

deeds. This revelation was ushered in by a prodigy. During the first days of the Lent of 1718 the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, according to custom, in the Church of the Cordeliers. Suddenly the Sacred Host seemed resplendent, and darted forth rays which filled the souls of the beholders with terror, incapable as they were of sustaining the brightness of the miraculous light.\* At the same hour, our Lord appeared to His faithful servant, and informed her of what was taking place in the Church of the Cordeliers, adding that this prodigy was the last effort of His love for a people whose disorders had long offended His justice, and that unless the town forsook its corrupt ways, He was prepared to strike it with a terrible scourge, that would be a warning to the entire universe. Anne Madeleine besought the divine Master to spare the guilty ones, and to lay upon her the whole weight of His just anger; but He made no reply to her supplications, and ordered her to reveal all to Monseigneur de Belzunce, in order that he might warn the magistrates and several others, whose bad lives were the chief cause of the evils that threatened the town.

At this very time Père Milley, the director of the humble nun, entered the monastery parlour, as if sent by Heaven itself, in order that he might receive the divine word from the lips of his spiri-

\* Circular of the first monastery of the Visitation of Marseilles, of 15th February, 1720. *Vie*, etc., loc. cit.

tual daughter. He was the more disposed to put faith in her words, inasmuch as a holy Carmelite who was also directed by him, had made a similar communication to him a few moments before. He went at once to the Bishop, and without delay transmitted to him the message from on high.\*

This important fact is most solidly established. In an authentic document, from which we have more than once had occasion to quote, and in a letter addressed later to the Visitation, and communicated to the faithful of his diocese, Monseigneur de Belzunce solemnly affirms that several years before the plague broke out, Sœur Anne Madeleine knew, by a heavenly light, of the scourge that threatened Marseilles, and that on the part of the Divine Master she foretold it to him through the intermediary of her confessor.†

Throughout this work, the Bishop of Marseilles has, until now, only appeared in the character of spiritual father of Sœur Anne Madeleine; we are now about to consider him under a new aspect. Monseigneur Henry François Xavier de Belzunce de Castelmoron, raised to the see of Marseilles in 1709, was one of the holiest and most illustrious

\* *Vie*, etc., loc. cit.

† Letter of Monseigneur de Belzunce to Sœur Marie Agnes de Gréard, of 10th May, 1732, communicated to the faithful of the diocese of Marseilles. See also the Circular of the first monastery of the Visitation of Marseilles, of 15th February, 1730,

prelates among the clergy of France. One may even apply to his holy memory the words of Scripture concerning the virtuous king Josias ; it will remain for the inhabitants of the city that he governed, as a sweet smell, as delicious honey, and as music at a banquet of wine.\* During an episcopacy of more than forty-five years, his every moment was sanctified by the most ardent and indefatigable zeal. The humble and gentle bishop governed his flock with the love of a good shepherd. He assembled synods, and perfected his clergy by retreats. He preached the gospel in towns, villages, monasteries, and even to the galley slaves.† When, in fine, the terrible scourge was let loose upon his beloved town, inspired by the Heart of Christ, the model of his own heart, he did the memorable actions that we are about to describe, acts that have made him worthy to be ranked among the heroes of religion.

No sooner did the holy bishop receive the message of the humble Visitandine than, faithful to the mandate of heaven, he hastened to fulfil his mission towards the guilty ones. He spared nothing that could open their eyes, or bring back his beloved flock from their corrupt ways. But in vain did he threaten them with the vengeance of God. The people of Marseilles, deaf to the voice

\* Ecdi. xlix. 1, 2.

† See l'Abbé Janffret's notice on Monseigneur de Bel-surce in the frontispiece of the select works of this prelate.



of their father, would not do penance for their sins.\*

We will not imitate here those historians who consider merely the visible world, but we will raise our thoughts to the First Cause of all things. Before the throne of the Almighty God there stands an altar, whereon the slain Lamb offers unceasingly the blood that He has shed,† and the angel of the sacrifice deposits the gifts and sighs of holy souls.‡ Prayer and reparation ascend from the altar to the throne, and appease the infinite justice of God, outraged by the crimes of men; and in proportion as the crimes increase, and the reparation ascends, so are the judgments of God commingled with justice and mercy, to the infinite admiration of the heavenly inhabitants.§

To Anne Madeleine was vouchsafed a glimpse of the august spectacle that had erst been contemplated by the seer of Patmos. She understood that justice would at first prevail, but that subsequently mercy would triumph; and she has herself told us that at this sight her soul was torn with conflicting emotions of grief and joy. || But the angel of the Lord poured out the vial of His wrath upon the guilty town, as of old upon the perverse Roman empire,¶ and struck it with a sore and grievous wound.\*\*

\* *Vie*, etc., loc. cit.

† *Apoc.* v. 6; viii. 3, etc. ‡ *Missal Rom.*, canon miss.

§ *Apoc.* xv. 3, 4; xviii. 20.

|| *Vie*, etc., loc. cit.

¶ *Apoc.* xvi. 2.

\*\* *Ibid.*

The poet has sung—

“Olive crowned, under the blue vault of heaven,  
Marseilles arose, powerful and blest.  
Commerce all around her, spreading wide its arms  
Covered with treasures the Tyrenean wave.  
From the gates of the East, smoothly, quickly sailing,  
Came at last the welcome long expected barks;  
They drew nigh: alas! dreadful was their freight!  
For Pestilence and Death lay hidden in their sails.”\*

These vessels were the instruments of Providence. The most celebrated among them was the *Grand Saint Antoine*, commanded by Captain Chataud. Hailing from Scyde, it reached the port of Marseilles on the 25th May, 1720, and at once the germs of contagion spread throughout the town. They were not stifled at once with due haste and energy. Great mercantile interests were at stake, and it was deemed desirable to save the rich cargo of the vessel. This carelessness favoured the spread of the scourge, and by the middle of July the greatest alarm reigned throughout the city.

Monseigneur de Belzunce hastened to order public prayers and a general fast; and he exhorted his flock to have recourse to a sincere and prompt penitence, and to an entire submission to the decisions of the Church, in order to appease the wrath of Heaven, and thus to avert the terrible calamity that had already struck fear and terror

\* Millevoye, Belzunce, or the Plague of Marseilles.

into every heart.\* But it was all in vain. The contagion filled the whole town. Dreadful is the picture that historians have given us of its ravages. The churches were deserted, the shops were closed, commerce forbidden, works suspended, and vessels forbidden to approach the quay; the course of justice was arrested, and crime reigned unheeded. Lamentable cries resounded on all sides, and death was everywhere. Family ties seemed to be at an end; fear and selfishness pervaded all ranks. Many sick, deprived of all help, were abandoned to their sad fate; others were driven from their homes, or thrown out of the windows. The corpses, in hideous heaps, lay exposed in the public ways; and so great was their number, that troops of galley slaves, who risked their lives in order to purchase their pardon and liberty, were inadequate to the task of taking them away. Famine also was soon added to the terrible afflictions of the unhappy city.†

St. Denis of Alexandria, describing the plague which afflicted his times, which doubtless was the same that St. John predicted in the Apocalypse, points out its providential character. "This great plague," wrote he, "came all at once, and was the

\* See the ordinance of 15th July, and the decree of the 30th, of the *Œuvres Choiesies*.

† S. A. Fabre, *Hist. of Marseilles*, liv. VI.; Lemontey, *Hist. de la Régence*; A. Laforet, the Plague of 1720, publ. in the *Revue de Marseilles*, 1863, &c.

most terrible and excessive evil to the enemies of God ; but we ourselves regarded it rather as a remedy or as a trial, although we were not entirely exempt from it."\* The same may be said of the plague of Marseilles. It attacked mercilessly all those who by their disorders had incurred the divine wrath ; not one escaped, in spite of all their precautions ! and the prophecy of Sœur Anne Madeleine was fulfilled to the letter.† It chastised also, less in their bodily health than in their honour, certain ministers of the Gospel who, by their lukewarmness and their self-indulgent lives, as also by their backwardness in repressing Jansenism, had rendered themselves unworthy of the martyrdom of charity ; these were the monks of Saint Victor, some of whom fled with their abbot, whilst the others entrenched themselves behind their thick walls. Many priests and religious fled likewise to the country, and were recalled by their bishop, that they might minister to the dying, under pain of disobedience and interdict.‡ But to the good, on the contrary, and to all noble hearts, the plague was but a fresh occasion of exercising their virtue.§ Foremost among the heroes

\* Ep. ad Alexandria.

† *Vie*, etc., loc. cit.

‡ See the ordinance of 2nd September, 1720: *Œuvres choisies*, t. 1, from the authors above mentioned.

§ The first monastery of the Visitation, for instance, was providentially preserved. See the Circular on the pestilence, 1st May, 1721.

of charity were the commanders of Laugeron and of Villes, and the Marshals Estelle, Moustier, Audimar, and Dieudé. Valiantly they upheld the power of authority amid these disastrous days; their piety, wisdom, and devotion, saved their country. They were ably seconded by the Chevalier Roze, famed for his charity, and by the representatives of science, sent either by the court of the Regent, or by the medical faculty of Montpellier. But above them all towered the great Bishop of Marseilles, with his heroic band of priests and religious.

Followed by his faithful ministers, the bishop encountered the greatest dangers: he went into the very jaws of death in order to help his unfortunate flock. Multiplied to some extent by his zeal, he seemed to be everywhere at once. He was to be seen threading the streets amid heaps of corpses and infected furniture; he went into houses where the stench was insupportable; he reconciled sinners who were lying on the same bed with the dead, and consoling and encouraging them, he exhorted them to die like Christians. He also gave to the starving poor all the money he possessed. One day, in order to encourage those who were removing the corpses, he mounted a tumbril and drove it himself to its destination.\* At his

\* See l'abbé Janffret, *Précis historique de la peste de Marseilles*, in the frontispiece of the *Œuvres choisies de M. de Belzunce*, as also the above-named works, and the P. Lanfant, *Oraison funèbre de Monseigneur de Belzunce*.

side fell secular priests and religious of different orders, among these eighteen priests who were assisting him ;\* still did he pursue his glorious mission with undaunted zeal, *doing always his charities*, according to the expression of his secretary,† and the admired of all beholders. Pope Clement XI. sent him his blessing to encourage him ;‡ he also granted indulgences to his flock, and with a solicitude truly worthy of a Roman Pontiff, he sent two vessels loaded with wheat.§

One of the most noble of the victims who succumbed was Père Claude François Milley. This zealous and indefatigable Jesuit, as Belzunce himself calls him, this wise director, this illustrious martyr of charity, whose courage and heroic actions were the admiration of all Marseilles, died almost under the eyes of the bishop, in the service of the plague-stricken, on the 1st September, just when he seemed most necessary to the shepherd and to the flock.|| Some time before his death, he wrote a touching farewell to his spiritual daughter. After describing the ravages of the plague, he ended thus : “ Pray that our great God may deign

\* See the above-name works, and Crétineau Joly, *Hist. de la Comp. de Jésus*, t. IV., c. 6.

† Unpublished Journal of Gonfon, the secretary, cited by Laforêt, *loc. cit.*

‡ Brief of 4th September, 1720, in the *Œuvres choisies*.

§ See the works quoted.

|| See the Letter of Monseigneur de Belzunce to Mère de Gréard.

to forgive my sins, and to accept the sacrifice of my life that I make with all my heart. Farewell! farewell! my dearest daughter, ever thine in the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ." How well do these beautiful words portray the admirable union that existed between these two generous souls, and that was to be still further strengthened by death.

While these noble victims were thus exposing their lives, and sacrificing them for the safety of the people, there was another, hidden beneath the virginal veil, who each day offered her life to God. Bitter anguish filled her soul at the sight of the terrible calamity. Ardently did she supplicate her God to stay His vengeance, and to accept instead her penances and her desires. Her life was not accepted, but in exchange her interior sufferings were redoubled in intensity, and for long weeks she was reduced to extremity. It was the desolation, the agony of Calvary.

In this anguish, succour came to her from the father of her soul, whom she had invoked for nine days. Père de Milley appeared to her in a cloud of glory, and calming her fears regarding the truth of the way along which God seemed to be leading her, he said these beautiful words: "True love has God alone for its principle; it is ever firm and unassailable, and is not disturbed by anything. The reason that you do not advance in the path along which God wishes you to go is that you are

always considering only yourself. . . ." At these words her doubts were dispelled, peace returned to her soul, and she experienced, as she assures us, a foretaste of beatitude, not troubled in the least degree even by the senses, which were miraculously suspended.\*

We are approaching the culminating point of this admirable life. So many graces and lights had prepared the soul of Sœur Anne Madeleine to receive from the very lips of Christ the important revelation that she was to transmit to the Bishop of Marseilles, and that would secure the triumph of the Sacred Heart. Already had she a presentiment of this triumph. "O happy scourge," cried she, "O happy scourge, which is to bring so much glory to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ!"†

But let us listen to her own words: "Having received an order from our dear mother to ask our Lord that He would deign to make known to me in what way He wished His Sacred Heart honoured, in order to obtain a cessation of the scourge that afflicted the town, I besought Him just before communion that He would send forth from His adorable Heart virtue that would not only purify the stains of my soul, but that would also enlighten my understanding, to see His will in this respect. . . . By the knowledge that He gave me after communion, I understood that His

\* *Compte de Conscience de Sœur Anne Madeleine.*

† Circular of 15th February, 1730, *Vie*, etc., loc. cit.



mercy had more share than His justice in His design to afflict the town with the plague. He showed me that He had willed to purge the Church of Marseilles from its errors,\* by opening to it His adorable Heart, the Source of all truth; also that He desired that a solemn Feast should be observed in Its honour on the day chosen by Himself, viz., the day after the octave of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and that until this could be arranged, every one of the faithful was to dedicate himself, by a prayer to be chosen by the bishop, to honour, according to the design of God, the adorable Heart of His Son; that by this means they should be delivered from the plague; and, in fine, that those who gave themselves up to this devotion, should *want for help only when the divine Heart should want for power.*"†

Sœur Anne Madeleine hastened to inform Monseigneur de Belzunce of this consoling revelation, and the pious prelate, feeling interiorly moved to give faith thereto, resolved to execute the wishes of our Lord. It will be the immortal joy and honour of the humble Visitandine that she so faithfully co-operated with the magnificent design of Providence. Few historians have thrown any light on her part in the glorification of the Sacred Heart at Marseilles, and the cessation of the plague that ensued; and yet, considering the document that we have just transcribed, the testimony

\* Jansenism.

† *Compte de Conscience.*

of Monseigneur de Belzunce and the Order of the Visitation,\* after the choice that was made of the chapel of the monastery for the annual ceremony of the vow, it cannot be doubted that her share in the work was as great and beautiful as we have shown.† This is why we unhesitatingly affirm that, after Blessed Margaret Mary, the first apostle of the Heart of Jesus, Anne Madeleine was among Christian virgins the most efficacious instrument for the exaltation of this adorable Heart.

In a decree of the 22nd of October, 1720, the heroic Belzunce informed his people of the public homage that was about to be rendered to the divine Heart, in order to appease heaven. "We have established, and we establish," he said, "in our diocese, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which will henceforward be celebrated every year, on the Friday immediately following the octave of the Blessed Sacrament: this day has been already fixed in many dioceses of this kingdom; and we make it a feast of obligation, to be solemnly observed throughout the diocese: on that day the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed in all the parish churches of this town, and in the other parts of the diocese, as also in all the suburbs of Marseilles, and in the religious com-

\* *Vie*, etc., loc. cit.

† A. Fabre, historian of Marseilles, alludes but slightly to the part of Sœur Anne Madeleine in the great work.

munities, secular and regular, throughout our diocese."\*

But Monseigneur de Belzunce was unwilling to await the yet distant day of the feast, and he resolved that on All Saints' day he would carry out the wishes of our Lord. Accordingly, on the morning of that day, the zealous pastor, bare footed, with a cord around his neck, and crucifix in hand, marched at the head of his clergy, now reduced to only twelve ecclesiastics, and proceeded in procession to the altar that had been erected by his orders at the entrance of the Grande Place. He was accompanied by an immense crowd of the people who, bathed in tears, filled the air with their lamentations. All those who had escaped death hastened to follow the man of God, regardless in that solemn hour of the contagion hitherto so dreaded. One long cry of distress rose up to heaven. Arrived at the foot of the altar, Monseigneur de Belzunce, his face bathed in tears, pronounced aloud an act of reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ; he then consecrated himself and his diocese to this divine Heart. After the consecration, the pontiff, ascending the steps of the altar, offered up the holy sacrifice, and distributed the Bread of Life to all who wished to feed thereon. It was a touching spectacle to see a whole town prostrated, for the first time, before the Heart of its God, imploring pardon

\* Historical documents of the plague of 1720, t. 1.

for its crimes, deliverance from evils, and consecrating to this divine Heart all its future destinies !\*

The prayer of Marseilles was heard. The scourge diminished in intensity, and soon entirely disappeared. It was manifest that the Sacred Heart had saved the town.

On the evening of the first feast of this now most beloved Heart, Monseigneur de Belzunce renewed, at the same altar, the act of reparation and the consecration of the preceding year.† But a far different and most brilliant assembly now flocked around the angel of Marseilles. In his hands he bore the Blessed Sacrament, escorted from the cathedral by the chapter, the clergy, the religious orders, and a pious crowd, who gratefully adored and blessed their Saviour.‡

Unhappily, their gratitude did not last long, Marseilles, forgetful alike of her misfortunes, of

\* See the above mentioned authors.

† In the following passage of the decree of 16th June, 1721, the pious bishop thus ordered the ceremonial of the feast : " Having experienced so promptly, and in such a marked manner, the marvellous effects of the goodness, and the infinite mercies of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as soon as we invoked It, most just it is, my dearest brethren, that in testimony of our gratitude, we omit nothing that can enhance the solemnity of the feast that we have instituted, especially on this first occasion of its celebration. ...."

‡ See the works quoted, and the decrees of Monseigneur de Belzunce, of 26th September and 15th October, 1721, which are really masterpieces of homage to the Sacred Heart, and testimonials of the gratitude of Marseilles.

the loss of forty thousand inhabitants of the city, and ten thousand in the surrounding country, and of the mercies of the Heart of Jesus, fell anew into her old disorders, and again incurred the wrath of heaven. At the same time a horrible sacrilege was committed in a church of the town, and Jansenism regained ground. It was not surprising that, during the year 1722, the vengeful arm of God was again lifted up against the city, and the plague reappeared, threatening those whom it had hitherto spared. In these grievous circumstances, Monseigneur de Belzunce, remembering the true remedy for such bitter evils, and reflecting moreover that the magistrates had not taken part publicly in the great act of reparation, begged the senators to repair this omission in the name of the whole town. "I do not," he said, "wish to propose anything that will be additional expense to the town, whose resources are already so exhausted: God, moreover, desires not our gifts, but our hearts. Let us make, then, in the name of the town, a vow that will have the power of disarming the vengeful arm that seems to be again lifted up."

The senators, Pierre Moustier, Balthazard Dieudé, Pierre Rémuzat, and Jean Baptiste Saint Michel, met in the town hall on the 28th May, 1722, in the presence of the Marquis de Pilles, the lieutenant and commander of the town and surrounding territory, in order to read this letter,

and to deliberate concerning the important object in view. On the proposition of Moustier, it was resolved to accede to the desire of the bishop, and the decision was registered in the written report of this memorable sitting. It will be interesting to give the text of the vow. After setting forth the object of the deliberation, the written report continues thus:

“Whereupon it has been unanimously decided that we, the senators, shall make a vow before his lordship the bishop, whereby we shall bind ourselves and our successors, in perpetuity, to hear Mass every year in the church of the first monastery of the Visitation, called the ‘*Grandes Maries*,’ on the day that he has fixed for the celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We will there communicate, and will offer, in reparation for the crimes committed in this town, a candle or torch of white wax, of the weight of four pounds, ornamented with the escutcheon of the town. This candle or torch shall be burnt before the Blessed Sacrament. In the evening of the same day we will assist at a general procession of thanksgiving.

“Marseilles, 28th May, 1722.

“Signed,

“MOUSTIER,

“DIEUDE,

“REMUSAT,

“SAINT MICHEL,

} Senators.”

Some days after, the senators pronounced the vow, and it is thus recorded in the following extract from the archives of the bishopric of Marseilles :

“ 4th June, 1722.

“ We, Henri François Xavier de Belzunce de Castelmoron, &c., make known that Messieurs Jean Pierre Moustier, Balthazard Dieudé, Pièrre Rémusat, and Jean Baptiste Saint Michel, Senators, in order to appease the anger of the Lord, and to obtain the cessation of the plague which has recommenced in this town, having deliberated on the 28th of the last month, concerning our exhortation to them to make a vow in honour of the Sacred Heart of our Saviour Jesus Christ, proceeded, clothed in their red robes, on that day, the Feast of the Most Blessed Sacrament, to our cathedral church. There on their knees before the high altar, in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which we bore in our hands, the first Senator, Moustier, speaking in the name of all four, pronounced the said vow.

“ Signed,	“ MOUSTIER,	}	Senators.
	“ DIEUDE,		
	“ REMUZAT,		
	“ SAINT MICHEL,		
	“ HENRY, Bishop of Marseilles.”		

There only remained to fulfil the engagement so solemnly made. This was done on Friday, 12th June, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, in the chapel

of the first monastery of the Visitation. Monseigneur de Belzunce offered the Holy Sacrifice, and gave Communion to the senators who, renewing the vow they had made in the cathedral, offered the blessed candle inscribed with the arms of the town.\* Very sweet to all hearts was this first celebration of the feast that was to be renewed every year. The remembrance of it was carefully preserved in the pious community, which numbered among its blessed inmates she who had been inspired by God to instigate all these great things.

Dating from that day, the number of the sick diminished in a marvellous manner, and at the end of a novena ordered by Belzunce in the church of the Visitation, the plague disappeared for ever from the noble city of Marseilles. In the month of September, a solemn thanksgiving was offered up, and the bishop addressed his people in these beautiful terms: "People whom the God of vengeance has twice smitten in His indignation, but whom also in His mercy He has twice delivered in a marked manner, *cease henceforward to fear, and tremble with joy*, because the adorable Heart of Jesus, to whom you have solemnly dedicated yourselves, has declared and *has done great things* in your favour! Let the memory of these prodigies be ever engraven in your minds and hearts! *Tell it often to your children, that they may repeat it to*

\* Circular of Mère d'Orlyé, of St. Innocent, superior, 1st Oct., 1723.



*their children, who will transmit it to succeeding generations, that the remembrance may go down to future ages! . . . .* Announce your deliverance and publish it to the extremities of the world, publish among nations the glory of your Liberator, and proclaim His marvels to all the people with whom you may have commercial intercourse. Tell them that you owe your deliverance to the Sacred Heart of Jesus alone, and that to It alone must they look for strength and consolation in all their tribulations."\*

The example of Marseilles, saved by the Sacred Heart, may be proposed to France. Alas! by her crimes the French nation has likewise drawn down upon herself the anger of Heaven. God, in His love, had constituted her the guardian of His rights, in order that she might propagate the truth everywhere, and might uphold among the nations the standard of Christianity. Instead of faithfully accomplishing this glorious mission, and notwithstanding all the virtues of her children, and the great works that took birth in her bosom, she has denied her baptism, and has abandoned the cause of Christ and of His Church. Greatly does this social apostasy offend the Heart of God, and it is not surprising that it should have drawn upon France the chastisements that of old punished the persecuting pagan empire. "The sixth angel," says St. John in the Apocalypse, "among those who

\* Mandate of 21st September, 1722.

bore the vials of the wrath of God, poured out his vial upon that great river Euphrates, and dried up the water thereof, that a way might be prepared for the kings of the East.”\* Noble nation, eldest daughter of that Church which you have never denied; eldest daughter, too, of the Sacred Heart, as the virgin of Paray affirms,† make reparation to the Heart that you have grieved the more in proportion to the greatness of His love for you. Follow the example of Marseilles, and consecrate yourself for ever to Him, sealing in His blood your reconciliation with God. Then your calamities will take flight, just as the evils of Marseilles were healed. But let this ceremony be a solemn and social act, made by the public powers in the name of the nation, on the famed eminence where you are even now building a triumphal sanctuary in honour of the Heart of Christ.

\* Apoc. xvi. 12.

† Letter of Blessed Margaret Mary to Mère de Saumaise, 17th June, 1689, as quoted above. The king of France, who personifies the nation, is here styled the eldest son of the Sacred Heart.

## CHAPTER VII.

## The Last Years.—Conclusion.

"Sub umbra illius, quem desideraveram, sedi : et fructus ejus dulcis gutturi meo.—I sat down under his shadow, whom I desired : and his fruit was sweet to my palate."—*Cant.* ii. 3.

The chief end of the mission of Anne Madeleine was accomplished by the consecration of the city of Marseilles to the Sacred Heart. In this respect the virgin of Marseilles was certainly more successful than the virgin of Paray-le-Monial. Margaret Mary did not behold in her lifetime the complete propagation of the devotion that she had inaugurated. Her sister of Provence, on the contrary, witnessed the triumph of the Heart of Jesus, the result in great measure of her own humble and generous efforts. She had indeed inherited the spirit of Blessed Margaret Mary, and great was the joy that filled her soul in this solemn hour of her happiness. She had not attained her twenty-seventh year, when her efforts were thus gloriously crowned. Burning with seraphic ardour, her only thought thenceforward was to offer

herself continually as a victim of praise and benediction, to be disposed of according to the will of her Master.

He possessed her already most fully, and disposed of her according to His will. "I no longer feel any opposition," said she, "in doing all that He wills, and in being all that He wishes me to be. I am so completely reduced to a state of nothingness, that it would be no longer possible for me to produce the least act by myself: I know nothing, and I wish to know nothing. I suffer without being able to occupy myself for a single instant about my sufferings, and without knowing what God means to work in me through suffering. My present disposition is to see nothing in God save only God Himself, to be contented with all that He wills, with all that He does, and with all that He omits. I no longer perceive in myself any desires opposed to His will. Hence my soul enjoys in all circumstances a peace of God which is entirely unmolested by the senses. . . . I no longer know either light or darkness, riches or poverty. All that I know and am concerned about is, that there is a God who in His goodness and omnipotence has made me capable of enjoying Him, and that He deserves to be loved as a God should be loved. Do not ask me anything farther; the knowledge of Him who is lifts me above all that is not Him."\*

\* Account of Conscience.

This language, while so simple and beautiful, is at the same time most profound. It shows us the high degree of perfection to which Sœur Anne Madeleine had attained. Purified from her infancy by trials of different kinds, enlightened by illuminations that came from the very bosom of God, she had long walked in the way of union. Great indeed was the height to which she had now attained. St. Denis the Areopagite tells us that divine love is extatic, that is to say, it ravishes out of themselves those who experience it, so that they no longer possess themselves, but are possessed by Him whom they love.\* So was it with Sœur Anne Madeleine. Made one by love with Jesus Christ, she no longer lived with her own life, but in the infinitely precious life of her Beloved. In this state the surrender of the soul is so sincere, so spontaneous, and so complete, that she no longer perceives in herself any will save that of her Master. The soul moreover leaves on one side, as it were, the senses and the operations of the understanding, all that is intelligible and apparent to the senses, all that is and all that is not, and she enters into the mysterious darkness of a holy ignorance. There, disengaged from the natural light, she soars to supernatural heights, where she is united to Him who is above all essence and all notions, and is lost, in as far as her capacity admits, in the invisible and infinite God who dwelleth

\* *De Nom. div.*, c. iv., 13.

above the highest intellectual summits of the heavenly city.\* It is evident that the soul raised to this great height must conceive so sublime an idea of the Supreme Being, that she soars above all that is not Him. She gains a fresh appreciation of God, and her joy is extreme at the thought that through His omnipotence and goodness she is rendered capable of enjoying Him. She has likewise a discernment of what Blessed Margaret Mary terms the sanctity of love,† she understands the just exactions of divine charity. In fine, the sacred flame that consumes her, gives her such intrepid courage and strength that she is ready to suffer a thousand torments, and to lose a thousand lives, for the love of this great God; she is ready to undertake the most extraordinary and difficult actions if she can thereby promote His glory.

Such were the interior dispositions of Anne Madeleine, when all at once her superior put a veto upon her great austerities, her long watchings, her rigorous fasts, and fearful macerations. This deeply pained her, but she submitted with the docility of a child. The superior of the monastery at this epoch was, as we have already said, Mère d'Orlyé de Saint Innocent. She was a religious of the monastery of Annecy, which is

\* Dion. Areop., *de Theol. myst.*, c. 1. In quoting this Father of mystical theology, we quote all great mystics, for instance, St. John of the Cross, the *Obscure night of the Soul*:

† *Life of the Blessed One*, written by herself.

considered the mother house of the whole Order of St. Chantal. She had been elected in 1719 by the Visitation of Marseilles, because, as this house sprang direct from the mother house, it was considered desirable for the better preservation of the spirit, to elect a superior from among the worthiest subjects of the latter.\* Mère Saint Innocent showed equal skill in directing the souls that were confided to her, and in governing the monastery with admirable wisdom, especially during the difficult time of the plague. She took the measure of forbidding the austerities of Sœur Rémusat, because she saw that her health was visibly declining. Through a design of Providence, she however permitted her some extraordinary penances when the Spirit of God inspired her daughter to ask for them. Sœur Anne Madeleine addressed herself indeed to her Divine Master, and complaining that she was not allowed to suffer sufficiently, she prayed Him to fasten her yet more closely to the cross. Jesus granted her prayer by increasing her infirmities and corporal sufferings, which the doctors could neither relieve nor understand. Interior pains were added to all her other torments: but it must be observed that these latter were intended no longer, as in the early stages of her spiritual life, to purify her powers: their aim was now far higher; they were intended in expiation of the sins on account of which

\* Circular of the first monastery of Marseilles, 1st May, 1721.

the divine High Priest immolated this pure victim. Whilst the surface of her soul was given over to pain and desolation, its centre remained united to God by the operation of God Himself.\* Thus it was through a most special and exalted grace that the humble Visitandine was enabled to work in union with Jesus for the salvation of souls, and had her glorious share in the sufferings that Christ must still suffer in His mystical body for the formation of His Church.†

Meanwhile the divine Master continued to make use of His faithful spouse for the transmission of His reproaches and His threats to certain souls. This was assuredly a glorious but most difficult mission, and it was the occasion of refined suffering to the generous soul. Her courage was rudely put to the proof. Sometimes, when the voice of our Lord made itself heard, she felt in the interior of her soul a violent repugnance to communicate the message; but after what we have said, it were almost needless to affirm that the triumph of grace was secured beforehand, and the humility of the sister alone made her tremble. Another point of resemblance, moreover, between her and her predecessor Blessed Margaret Mary, was that although arrived at a very high degree of union with God, she had none the less to endure, through a special design of the divine Master, terrible revolts and repugnances. In order to

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 10.

† Coloss. i. 24.



triumph completely over herself in this matter, Sœur Anne Madeleine made a vow of perfection, with the approbation of her director and her superior; she tells us of it in these words: "This day, the 8th December, 1727, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the most Blessed Virgin, I have, through the inspiration of grace, engaged myself by vow to pray, suffer, and act according to the impulse of grace, for the benefit of the souls to whom God wills that my prayers and sufferings be applied. I make this vow subject to the will and with the full permission of my confessor and my superior, in order that they may dispense me therefrom, should it ever become an occasion of scruple or trouble to my soul. It seemed to me that God expected this vow from me, and that He has willed to strengthen, to purify, and to enlighten me, in order to enable me to glorify Him as He wishes, in reparation for all the glory that He is deprived of by others.

"I have understood also that by this means I shall be enabled to overcome the repugnance to act that I feel on certain occasions, which proceeds from human prudence, and which has often made me lose the effect of the light that has been given me either for myself or others. I am then resolved, and I promise God to follow the impulse of grace blindly, reserving only to myself the liberty of consulting the person He has given me as my guide on those occasions wherein He expects me to act;

at all other times, where I have only to pray and suffer, I will abandon myself entirely to His Spirit, in order to render Him all the glory that He wishes from me. I also believe that it is He who has inspired me to take this engagement upon myself, because He seems to have formed the vow in my soul in a manner worthy of Him, and which is above all that my own industry or application could accomplish. But O, my soul, what a subject of confusion is not this for thee! Love alone ought to have sufficed to incite thee to do thy duty, without the necessity of binding thee otherwise than by the bonds of charity. Thou, O my God, knowest my weakness: strengthen me, and make me worthy to accomplish all Thy designs. Amen.”\*

From that moment the divine Master was unreserved with the victim of His Heart. He manifested to her the most intimate secrets of a number of consciences, and He constantly made use of her as His messenger to those souls to whom He wished to convey either warnings or commands. This cost Anne Madeleine much pain. The revelation alone of the sins of others and the outrage done to God, gave inexpressible anguish to her soul, at once so loving and so refined in its delicacy. In addition to this, she drew upon herself sufferings, shame, and difficulties of all kinds, through transmitting the

\* Account of Conscience.

messages of her divine Master. But as we have seen, the divine love which consumed her, filled her with an immense zeal for the interests of the Sacred Heart, and her courage was equal to the most difficult undertakings.

Most of the facts to which we here allude were of a nature to remain hidden, and are therefore unknown to us ; but there were some, such as the following, which became known. An ecclesiastic of apparent piety nourished in his soul feelings of revolt against the Church. Everything seems to indicate that he had been led astray by the Jansenists. Although Anne Madeleine was well aware of the irascible and violent character of this misguided priest, she hesitated not to fulfil towards him the mission confided to her by her divine Master. Having succeeded in bringing him to the parlour, she received him with every mark of respect, knelt down before him, and begged of him with tears in her eyes to remember that time was short, and to attend without delay to the warning of Heaven. Instead of entering into himself with humility before God, the priest at these words trembled with indignation at being found out. Infuriated with rage, he termed the gentle messenger of the Sacred Heart a visionary and a hypocrite, and circulated throughout the town the most infamous assertions concerning her audacity and her character.

The affair made much noise. Some, knowing

the holiness of Sœur de Rémusat, doubted not that she had but followed the inspiration of Heaven. Others, unable to believe that a minister of the altar, whose life was apparently so pure, could be a hidden enemy of the Church, defended him at the expense of the humble Visitandine. She meanwhile lost neither her peace nor her serenity. To all who questioned her, she contented herself with replying that if this priest did not correct himself he would die within three years. The prophecy was verified. The unfortunate man refused to be converted; he clung to his errors, and when the three years of respite had elapsed, he was attacked by a severe illness. The voice of charity then made itself heard by his bedside, but he refused to listen; and thus he died, without giving any sign of repentance.\*

In the retirement of her cloister, Sœur Anne Madeleine grieved deeply when she heard this sad news. What a sorrowful mission was hers! But also, at other times, what a mission of consolation! May this sublime mission be continued in our days by all the generous souls who, veiling their faces before the awful sanctity of God, grieve at the foot of the altar over the ingratitude of men, and the outrages that are committed against His infinite sanctity. May they pray unceasingly, and be prodigal of their tears and sufferings for the souls that wander far from the

\* *Vie*, etc., c. 10.

source of life, in order that, escaping the second death, they may glorify throughout eternity the mercies of the Heart of Jesus.

Meanwhile the apostolate of Sœur Anne Madeleine became daily more fruitful. A nun living retired in a cloister at Marseilles is indirectly reprov'd by her concerning the cowardly and guilty life that she hid under the appearance of virtue; entering into herself, she humbly acknowledges that the holy Visitandine is enlightened from on high, and does penance for her faults. A vast number of pious persons consult Anne Madeleine concerning their interior life; she discloses to them their most secret thoughts, and reads the very depths of their souls, and under her guidance they aim at and obtain a higher degree of perfection.

Yet more touching is it to see the eminent minister of the sanctuary placing all his confidence in the confidant of the Sacred Heart. She at once discloses to him his most secret thoughts, his projects of perfection, and the obstacles that he meets with; in a word, all the most intimate operations of his soul. Listening to her exhortations, the venerable prelate works with fresh ardour at his perfection, and dies a little later on a most holy death. Sœur Anne Madeleine was amazed at the success of her apostolate. She attributed all the glory to God, then, clinging yet closer to the cross whence she drew all her strength, she cried out: "Great riches are at-

tached to this state of suffering, both for me and for all those for whom God wills me to pray. Now more than ever has He placed in my hands the interests of His glory, and I must uphold them according to the light and strength that He gives me.”\*

Abundantly did she receive this light and strength. She then asked of God one of two things: either that the knowledge He gave her to be transmitted to others should produce in them the effect that He wished, or else that her declaration of it should cover her with confusion, in order that she might find in her own humiliation wherewith to confound the enemy. Very often this last grace was granted to her. More than once, bitter words and reproaches, and even insults, were her only reception. Far from murmuring, she rejoiced thereat, and offered up to her Lord these precious trials, in order to obtain help for the souls who were thus resisting grace. She desired that the Heart of the divine King might find in the humiliation of His servant some compensation for the glory of which He was deprived by those who were deaf to His voice. Whilst she thus immolated herself for the guilty, she did not forget the virtuous souls who in great numbers had recourse to her counsels. The supernatural light which never failed her enabled her to guide them along the way of perfection up to the very altar of

\* *Account of Conscience; Life, etc.*, c. 10.

sacrifice. In their trials she consoled them ; and when, in the wounded Heart of Christ, they had learnt to love the cross, she showed them that suffering was the sacred seal with which God distinguished His friends ; and mounting still higher, she taught them that suffering endured for Jesus is the only thing that can sweeten life to the soul that loves.\*

Such was the crowning point of the mission of Anne Madeleine. Glancing now retrospectively at the life that is so near its end, we must place the virgin of Marseilles among those apostolic women whom Providence raises up from time to time, to be the helpers and servants of the priesthood. For, as St. Francis de Sales affirms, though women are incapable of the apostolic dignity on account of their sex, they are nevertheless capable in some measure of the apostolic office, and they may render much service to God, procuring in certain ways the advancement of His glory, like the apostles.† This has been a subject of admiration from the very birth of the Church. Who does not remember the flock of holy women who seconded with so much zeal the works of the apostles, and many of whom are mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans ? Phœbe the deaconess, who assisted the saints ; ‡ Priscilla, who together with her husband Aquilas, became the helpmate of St.

\* See one of her letters quoted in her life, c. 10.

† Entretiens Spirituels, Entret. vi.

‡ Rom. xvi. 1, 2.

Paul in the service of Jesus Christ, and who, not content with giving up her house for the celebration of the sacred mysteries amidst the assembly of the Christians, exposed also her life for the apostle, earning thereby the gratitude of all the churches;\* Mary, who worked for the Christians of Rome; Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persidus;† Julia, and the sister of Nereus, who did great things for the service of the Lord; finally, Junius,‡ who with Andronica, was great among the apostles, after having had the glory of sharing the captivity of Paul.§ These noble helpmates of the apostolate were succeeded in subsequent ages by other women, who had received a similar mission from Heaven; for instance, Catherine of Sienna, Theresa, Margaret Mary. Among these apostolic souls we must rank Anne Madeleine. She was most truly a help to the priesthood, inasmuch as she continually offered up her prayers and sufferings for the ministers of the sanctuary, in order that the grace of God might be poured upon their apostolic works; and she was the constant recipient of supernatural light to be transmitted to them.||

\* Rom. xvi. 3, 4. † Ibid., 6. ‡ Ibid., 12 and 15.

§ Rom. xvi. 12, 15. Some commentators speak of Junius as a man, because of these expressions of the apostle, *which* cannot, they say, be applied to a woman: We do not agree with this explanation, but with many others, we think that, interpreted in our way, the passage can perfectly be applied to a woman.

|| *Vie*, etc., c. 12 and 13. For instance, Père Girard, S.J.,



Also was she a coadjutor of the priesthood, because she immolated herself constantly for the salvation of sinners, and exercised a spiritual maternity over a great number of souls; because the Bishop of Marseilles had frequent recourse to her counsel and supernatural lights in the most important circumstances, as much for the government of his diocese as for his own conduct;\* and that more than once she was charged to transmit the wishes of Heaven† to this great bishop; and above all, - because Providence had associated her with him in the work of the solemn consecration of the episcopal town to the Heart of Jesus Christ. This resumes the whole life of Anne Madeleine, and shows the characteristic feature of her beautiful mission.

Nothing now remains but to describe the last days upon earth of this great soul. The hour of her deliverance approached, and it seemed as if Christ would spare nothing in order to ornament His faithful spouse, and make her worthy of His

director of the sister after the death of Père Milley, received once a note from the sister which shows us the spiritual union existing between these two souls, and the lights that each received for the other. In this note the sister told the venerable religious that our Lord asked of him a spirit of annihilation, that he should be dead to self, and continually dependent on grace.

\* One day Monseigneur de Belzunce hesitated to take a journey. The sister assured him, on the part of our Lord, that the result would be successful, and the prophecy was exactly verified.

† *Vie*, etc., loc. cit. Letter of Monseigneur de Belzunce.

most pure eyes. At the commencement of a retreat, in order to prepare her for seraphic contemplation, He ravished her and inundated her with a dazzling light. This is her own account of the matter: "On the first day of my retreat, during the morning meditation, I found myself all at once in the presence of the three adorable Persons of the Trinity; and following the inspiration that I had, I begged Them to bless my retreat, and to fill every moment of it. At the same instant my soul was surrounded with the power of the Father, as with a thick cloud, that hid me entirely from myself, and also from all created things, in order that I might be only susceptible of the impressions whereby I was to attain to the profound knowledge of what God is in Himself. Then it seemed to me that our Lord Jesus Christ addressed me thus: 'No one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son, and him to whom the Son wills to make Him known.'

"I understood that our Lord willed to give me an infinitely purer knowledge of His Father and of Himself than all that I had known until that day. And as I could not contain such rich treasures in myself, He opened to me His bosom, in order that in Him and by Him I might be able to sustain them. How admirable were the secrets that it was given to me to know in and by this adorable bosom! Canst thou, O my soul, speak

worthily of them? O no, my God, to Thee alone doth it belong to reveal Thy own marvels. All that I understood of Thee is that I am not capable of understanding Thee. Thou hast willed to divinise my soul, so to say, by transforming it into Thyself, after having destroyed its individual form.”\*

St. Francis de Sales distinguishes between the ecstasy of the understanding and the ecstasy of the will. One is in splendour, the other in fervour; one is by way of admiration, the other by devotion. “When,” he adds, “it pleases the divine goodness to give to our understanding some special light whereby it is enabled to contemplate the divine mysteries with an extraordinary and most high contemplation, then, seeing more beauty than it has before even imagined, it enters into admiration, . . . and in as far as this admiration, when it is strong, holds us above and outside ourselves by the lively attention and application of our understanding to heavenly things, it puts us, in consequence, into an extasy.”† These words explain the sublime state of Anne Madeleine. Looking upon a ray of the unspeakable beauty of God, her understanding is ravished, and because, according to the doctrine of St. John, the apparition of God makes us like to God,‡

\* *Account of Conscience.*

† *Treatise on the Love of God*, book VII., c. 4.

‡ 1 St. Joan. ii.

she feels herself raised in this ravishment to the resemblance of God Himself.

In the course of the year 1728, towards the time of the Assumption, Mère Nogaret, who had been re-elected superior, confided to Sœur de Rémusat the charge of housekeeper. There was assuredly a dispensation of Providence in this appointment: for on the one hand it was entirely opposite to all the tastes of Sœur Anne Madeleine, and on the other, she was so weak that she was obliged to support herself by leaning against the walls while making the round of the house. It was hoped, and the sister shared the expectation, that God would work a miracle, and let her recover her health in the employment which would, naturally speaking, have completed its ruin. Sœur de Rémusat shall tell us here herself that the divine Master did not fail to work this marvel. "In my greatest occupations," she says, "I feel neither any difficulty nor any pain, and I am as much occupied with God as in the time of prayer. I never have the slightest doubt as to what I ought to do or to leave undone. The Spirit of God deigns to prompt me in all my duties, and He enables me to fulfil them so perfectly that there is no room for fear. Generally speaking, I am completely occupied and filled with the plenitude of God; this ravishment of the soul extends to the body, which is strengthened for the employment that God has given me, in a way that I do not fear to term miraculous.

I suffer more than ever, but all the same I continue my way; I have even been inspired to ask our revered mother to permit me to go to matins, which I have not done for eight years. God seems to will that His strength should shine forth in my weakness. . . .”\*

She says again: “My heart is always solitary, and it ceases not to pray amidst a multitude of occupations and cares calculated to absorb mind and body. Concerning the body, nothing is more astonishing than the way in which God comes to its assistance. If I have any hard work to do that requires strength, that strength is given to me, but only for the time in which it is required, and afterwards I fall back into my previous state of weakness and languor. This experience, many times repeated, has emboldened me to take nearly everything upon myself, or rather upon the strength that God has given me, without fear, and without having recourse to the assistance of any one.”†

Another time she wrote: “My interior occupation is always the same; it ever seems to gain strength in the dissipation inseparable from such an employment. God communicates Himself, and permits that He should be found everywhere. On the day of the great Feast of the Sacred Heart that we have just been keeping, I was overwhelmed with His mercies; it seemed to me that the Heart

\* Account of Conscience. † Ibid.

of Jesus dilated Itself to pour forth more abundantly Its riches into my heart. . . . I cannot find expressions to make known all that God deigns to operate in me. My soul is in extreme astonishment at beholding all that is shown to it, without, nevertheless, leaving the boundaries of faith; it is as if God overflowed into my soul and even into my body. . . .

"I can scarcely any longer pray without finding myself in a kind of rapture, which renders me incapable of attending to anything that passes without. There is nothing violent or troubling in this rapture, but it is a satisfaction, a plenitude, which renders the soul powerless to receive anything that is given to it, save from within. . . . I live, by the grace of God, and by the strength of His operation, in a state of continual consummation both in soul and body. God is my light and my occupation; I know none other. The constant sight of what God is purifies my soul in such measure as to prepare it, from moment to moment, for an increase of knowledge and love; these graces bear with them I know not what fire, which purifies and prepares the way for them."\*

These last lines show us how the ravishment of the will often accompanies the ravishment of the understanding. "These two faculties," says St. Francis of Sales, "communicate to each other their ravishments; the splendour of Beauty makes

\* Account of Conscience.

us look at it, and love makes us love it."\* This is what is seen in Sœur Anne Madeleine. Whilst the eye of her intelligence is fixed firmly on ineffable splendours, her soul, trembling under the divine touch, tastes a sweetness which delights and satisfies her. But yet, because this spouse of Jesus is also the victim of His Sacred Heart, the sacrifice must be completed. This is what we are about to contemplate. Anne Madeleine is always fastened to the altar, and there, under the hand of her divine Sacrificer, she undergoes for the glory of the Holy Trinity an admirable consummation of her whole being. The essence of sacrifice consists precisely in a certain destruction and transformation of the victim in honour of the Most High. This was seen on Calvary, when Jesus Christ, the supreme High Priest of the law of grace, immolated the great Victim of the One true Sacrifice, that is to say, His Sacred Body, which was annihilated in the Passion, consumed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, and despoiled of a life subject to infirmities, in order to be clothed with a new life in the splendours of the Resurrection. This sacrifice is repeated in a mystical manner on the altars of earth, and will be eternally celebrated in a glorious manner on the high altar of heaven. But in this sublime function Christ offers to the divine Majesty, not only His natural body, but also His mystical body : that is to say,

\* *Treatise on the Love of God*, book VII. c. 5.

the assembly of the elect. The natural body of Jesus, together with His mystical body, form the whole victim, that He will eternally sacrifice to His Father on the sublime altar of heaven. This sacrifice begins here below. By the operation of grace, our earthly life is mortified and in some measure destroyed, to give place to a higher life in us, which is a participation of the theandric life of Jesus. We undergo a sort of combustion of our being by the fire of heaven, that is to say, by the fire of divine love. And finally, when death arrives, a complete destruction and true transformation of our being takes place; we are immolated to the glory of our great God. When all the elect shall have passed through the flame of this holocaust, when the end of all things shall have arrived, the mystical body of Christ will have attained the predestined number, and the offering that this divine High Priest is to present to His Father will be perfected. Then for ever we shall be united to our Head in the light of heaven; we shall be set as precious stones in His priestly robes, prefigured in the Old Law by the robe of the High Priest, whereon the twelve tribes of Israel were represented as an image of the universality of souls.\* Under this triumphal robe of His priesthood, the Heart of the sovereign

\* See "*Mary and the Priesthood*," c. 8 and 9, wherein these thoughts are developed more fully, supported by texts from Scripture and from the Fathers.



Sacrificer will eternally beat in an ecstasy of love and homage to the adorable Trinity. These beautiful truths must be borne in mind in studying the operations of Jesus on the souls that He has chosen for His victims. The divine Master, in His character of High Priest is now, as we shall see, about to consume His generous spouse in the flames of His love, and He will confer upon her a sublime grace that shall make her worthy to be ranked alongside of a Catherine of Sienna, a Theresa, and a Margaret Mary. This is how she relates it herself: "It seemed to me," she said, "as if my being was about to be lost and annihilated, in order to give place to the new being that God formed in me. During this enjoyment of God Himself, my soul was, as it were, separated from my body. I understood that when God shows to a creature something of His essence, He begins by raising it above humanity, in order that the light may penetrate through fewer obstacles, and may be received in all its fulness. 'I cannot describe the effects of this in the interior, but God has been pleased to accompany them with a sensible proof of His love. It seemed to me that our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to me, and that, taking away my heart, He placed it in His own, which appeared as an ardent furnace, and that my heart placed therein was instantly changed into fire. He then restored my heart to its natural place, and I felt a pain like to that experienced

when fire and iron are applied to some part of the body, with this difference, that the painful operation was accompanied with a sweetness that I cannot describe.”\*

This signal favour was granted to the pious Visitandine on the day of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, and probably in the year 1729. Anne Madeleine tells us of the ardour that filled her when her heart was restored to her, all burning from its momentary sojourn in the Heart of her Spouse ; but she omits to tell us that the flames of divine love made an opening for themselves, and that even when healed, and after her death, this wound was still to be seen in the form of a heart upon her bosom. She confided this secret only to her superiors, but it has been preserved to us through the traditions of the monastery, and a visit to her precious remains has verified the fact.† It was indeed a beautiful design of Providence that the apostle of the wounded Heart of Jesus should have her own heart wounded, and should bear upon her heart the image of the adorable wound of her Spouse.

But let us listen to the sister relating the marvellous effects of these last graces: “The most hidden mysteries seemed no longer obscure: I beheld them in a clear light, freed from the least shade of doubt. I feel a fire which penetrates to the very marrow of my bones, and makes me suffer

\* Account of Conscience.

† Vis, etc., c. 11.

in a manner known to God alone. Every moment there is given to me, by means of this fire, a new grace, and a purer light to see God as He is. . . . The fire with which God burns me is so violent that it seems to me that the application of natural fire would be nothing in comparison to my sufferings. For some little time past, reverend father, God appears to pour into my heart, and into all the powers of my soul, a divine principle, that concentrates, elevates, and dilates them, in order to render them capable of receiving the goods that He deigns to impart. These goods lose none of their purity from being received in a corrupt nature: but by the infinite goodness of God, and by the thanksgiving that the creature makes in referring them to Him, they always remain as they were when they left His bosom, and in like manner do they so return to Him who gave them. God has deigned to introduce this criminal nothingness into His adorable bosom, in order that by this sort of divinisation a proportionate glory might be formed in me. His riches are poured forth upon my soul in a resistless torrent that carries all before it, without, however, either effort or violence. All is done peacefully, because the passage is open and the obstacles raised; and whereas before the light seemed to produce darkness in my soul, on account of its weakness, and that it still needed to be purified; the soul is now, on the contrary, able to sustain in some

measure the weight of the majesty of God, and the splendour of His glory, no longer by the lights of faith, but by a clearness of vision which has given it a kind of foretaste of the beatific vision, more fitted for heaven than for earth. . . . That which astonishes me beyond measure is, that the depth of my soul is occupied with God in such a manner as not to be hindered in the least by the impressions from without. So completely is my soul thus occupied and filled, that it has no longer any eyes or room for anything external. God makes Himself understood no longer by words that seem to flow from Him, but by a knowledge drawn from His bosom, and that is Himself as He is.

“The light that He sends in words shows His will, but this light also executes His will in a manner worthy of Him. Some days ago, in the parlour, I was suddenly ravished in this manner; I was enabled, however, to conceal the fact from others, and they only perceived that I could scarcely reply, or pay any attention to what was said to me. I suffered much from the violent efforts that I made, and was at length obliged to leave the room. If this continues, reverend father, it will cause my death: but oh, in what a beautiful manner! These attacks are so strong that I cannot resist them, and wherever they come upon me I am compelled to succumb, and am quite unable to prevent their external effects. The other day, when the priest gave me the Sacred Host, a lively

knowledge was vouchsafed to my soul of the complacency taken therein by the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity; They manifested to me the immense riches that They possess in Their unity. . . . It was impossible for me to leave the communion grating; happily no one else wished to communicate; but all the remainder of the community were in the choir. I remained in this condition for more than an hour, and the impression of this grace lasted nearly all day, as did likewise the state of exhaustion to which it reduced me. Thus did God disclose Himself to His creature! How have I merited that He should thus manifest Himself to me, and what can I do for Him? . . . Would that I could draw all hearts to Him! I was, as it were, surrounded and penetrated [with the glory of God, who has made me participate in the knowledge whereby He knows Himself, and in the love wherewith He loves Himself. I have understood, but in a way that is beyond all expression, that the Three adorable Persons of the Trinity have operated new things in me, and have contracted with me an alliance of love and of mercy. I do not know how it is that these views and impressions have lasted; all that I know is, that the senses have had no part therein. Everything has been accompanied with such great clearness and certitude, that it is no longer possible for me to have the least doubt concerning the truth of the things that have been

communicated to me, God has, in His mercy, made me see and taste the properties of His goodness, of His power, His wisdom, His glory, and His other divine perfections. It is an abyss of delight which is all the greater and more excellent, in that it is contained in the simple view, if I may so express myself, of the essence of God."

..... "God has sometimes made me participate," she wrote again, "in the glory that the angels find in Him. This participation this year, was more abundant on the day of their feast. It seemed to me that, together, in the same light, we drank from His bosom, and were together ravished before the object of our mutual glory and love. The guardian angels of my sisters were more present to me than to them, but in a spiritual manner, which made me feel throughout the day absorbed in a torrent of delight."\*

In another extasy our Lord Jesus Christ deigned to manifest to Sœur Anne Madeleine the riches of His blood, and its application to souls. She thus relates this vision: "At the commencement of my prayer I felt God drawing to Himself all the powers of my soul; my senses were almost lifeless, and incapable of receiving any impression from without. Then, by a purely spiritual vision, I saw our Lord Jesus Christ, who deigned to show Himself to me in His Humanity,

\* Account of Conscience.

and presenting to me His Heart, He permitted me to penetrate into Its secrets and mysteries: from this Heart there flowed forth a great abundance of blood upon me and upon my actions, which, by virtue of this blood, were no longer defective in the eyes of God. Although this sight was so striking, it seemed to me that I was solely occupied with the riches of the divinity, which resided in the adorable Heart of my Saviour. He disclosed to me His mercies towards my soul, and towards a great number of persons for whom He wills that I should pray. I begged of Him to let this blood flow upon all for whom He makes me intercede; but among all whom I presented to Him, one alone received it in the measure that He wished to impart it to them. I perceived then the various obstacles that prevented these souls from receiving the full measure of His mercies, and God appeared to find in me the glory that they refused to render Him. From that time it seemed to me that I no longer acted, save by a divine principle, that ordained and regulated all my movements, and likewise enabled me to fulfil perfectly all my exterior duties without any special application on my own part."

"The same object," she wrote shortly after, "has presented itself to me a second time, in a still clearer and more marked manner; with this difference, that whilst on the first occasion the Blood of my Saviour Jesus shed Itself upon me,

and upon my actions, I have this time been permitted myself to draw, from this adorable Blood, the light, the strength, and the life of God Himself. The three divine Persons have deigned to contract a new and eternal alliance with me; I have been plunged, as it were, in the glory that surrounds the throne of the majesty of God, and I have heard these words addressed to me by the blessed spirits: 'Happy are the eyes that have seen what you see!' I received an assurance, moreover, that, notwithstanding any exterior duty that obedience may require, I shall never lose, during my life, the light and occupation that our Lord makes me draw in His Blood."\*

Sœur Anne Madeleine had one last point of resemblance with her divine Master: it was given to her to consummate her sacrifice at thirty-three years of age. From the time of her entry into the monastery, she had constantly said that she would die at that age, but her companions had attached no importance to her words. Far otherwise was it, however, when, in the middle of a recreation, in the first days of her thirty-third year, she exclaimed suddenly in an extatic transport: "I shall die this year. . . . . Oh how delightful to die at thirty-three years of age!"†

These words spread alarm throughout the monastery, especially when a few days after they

\* Account of Conscience.

† *Vis*, etc., c. 12.



seemed about to be verified by the dangerous fever that laid Anne Madeleine on her bed. Tears and prayers flowed around her: she, on the contrary, saw death approaching with the utmost serenity. But the hour of sacrifice had not yet sounded; God hearkened to the grief-laden prayers of the nuns, and soon Anne Madeleine was sufficiently recovered to write as follows to her director, Père Girard: "I have no desire, Reverend Father, either for life or for death: I have only a momentary feeling at times, that it would be sweet to spend my thirty-third year, which is but now beginning, in suffering, and thus to crown all the years of my life. But I do not dwell upon this thought, neither will I shrink from work, however long and painful, if such be the will of our Lord."

The joy of the venerable nuns of the monastery was great when they saw their beloved sister recovered from her alarming illness, and occupied as heretofore with all her numerous duties. They thanked God fervently for having preserved to their love her who had become for all a model of the virtues of the religious life, and a lively image of the meek and humble Heart of Jesus Christ. Alas! brief was the duration of their joy. Whilst they all deemed Anne Madeleine perfectly well, she, on the contrary, felt that her strength was ebbing away. She said one day to the sister who had charge of the wardrobe: "Why,

dear sister, have you made me a new habit? I shall not live to wear it out, and others may not perhaps like to wear it after me." She said to another sister, to whom she had been appointed spiritual assistant: "Ah! poor sister, you will soon lose your assistant." She was then undergoing an excess, both of suffering and of divine consolations, which completely exhausted her. Like St. Teresa, she could neither speak of God, nor hear Him spoken of, without an emotion of love that she could not suppress. And yet, of what else could she speak, or what could others speak of before her, save only of the Sacred Heart that she loved? More than once, therefore, she was obliged to leave the refectory or the assembly room, in order to relieve her heart by giving free vent to her tears. "I do not think," said she one day, "that I shall be able much longer to bear these attacks: but the holy will of God be done."

To these presentiments of her approaching end, Jesus often added assurances to His beloved spouse of the glory that was prepared for her. "More and more frequent, and more perfect," wrote she, "are the assurances that God gives me of the glory that He reserves for me in heaven. In His mercy He has made me see and taste the properties of His goodness, of His power, of His wisdom, of His glory, and of all His other divine perfections: it is an abyss of delights, that are all the greater and more excellent in that they are

contained in the sole and simple view of the essence of God."

We come at length to the last lines that were traced by the hand of the revered sister, and were addressed to the director of her conscience. They show in an admirable manner how completely the divine life had become her life. "How admirable is God in His conduct towards me! How infinite His mercies towards this criminal nothingness! I live, by the strength of His operation, in a state of continual extremity in body and in soul. I feel, reverend father, that all my senses and every action is ruled and controled by a Divine Being, who directs them in a manner that I neither can nor wish to understand. God is my light, my occupation, and my life; I know none other.

"It seems to me sometimes that I suffer much; but, generally speaking, I neither regard suffering nor enjoyment. Every distinct object seems absorbed in the continual vision that God gives me of what He is. This view brings great purity to the soul, and disposes it to increase from one moment to another in knowledge and in love; this is not even hindered by the multitude of my infidelities, for God takes care to efface them by the simultaneous light and grief that He gives me concerning them. Every day I perceive more clearly, reverend father, that, as you have pointed out to me, there is still much to give, and more to

receive. For this you tell me that life is necessary ; be it so. But beg of our Lord to hasten the completion of His work, and not to permit that I should retard it in the least."\*

The work to which Sœur Anne Madeleine alluded was already indeed completed. The bride of the Lamb had prepared herself, and the hour of the eternal nuptials had arrived.† The signal for her departure came at the end of January, 1730, in the form of a spitting of blood that left her almost lifeless. On hearing of this accident, Mère Nogaret hastened to the assistance of her spiritual daughter, and placed her in the infirmary, then presided over by Anne Victoire Rémusat, the sister of the invalid. Sorrow filled all hearts. But it was still hoped that the evil might be averted, and the absence of any bad symptom increased this expectation. God even seemed to bless the tender cares that were lavished on His servant, for on the Sunday within the octave of St. Francis of Sales, Anne Madeleine had regained her strength sufficiently to be able to rise and even go to the chapel. But the cold struck her, and a severe chill was the result. The doctor still averred that there was no cause for alarm ; but Anne Madeleine was convinced that her end approached, and she spoke of it to her mother and sisters, who

\* Account of Conscience ; *Vie*, etc., c. 13.

† Apoc. xix. 7.

vied with each other in their eagerness to hear and profit by her last exhortations.

The divine Spouse, who so fully possessed this beloved virgin, was pleased to leave her upon the cross during these last precious moments, in order that to the final sigh she might fulfil her glorious mission of victim. He permitted therefore thick darkness to envelop her interior powers, so that she was deprived of the joy that she would otherwise have felt at the sight of her approaching deliverance. To these mental pains were added sharp bodily sufferings, that were not even allayed by the wasting away of her strength. The fever which consumed her, joined to the ardour of her love, was like a devouring fire within her. But heavenly peace and serenity reigned upon her countenance, and whilst her sisters watered with their tears this bed of suffering, she poured out her whole soul to her venerable superior in these beautiful words: "I could not have believed, dear mother, that God would have been so gracious as to thus let me suffer up to the last. All is crucified in me. I suffer, dearest mother, more than I can express. Pray, I beseech you, that I may correspond with this grace."\*

Death meanwhile rapidly approached. We cannot do better here than retrace the exact words in which the compiler of the life of Sœur Anne Madeleine has described her last hours.

\* *Vie, etc.*, c. 13.

She dwelt in the same monastery that was sanctified by the presence of Anne Madeleine, and she piously collected all the traditions concerning this great soul. Her account of the closing scene is redolent of the ardour of sanctity that is exhaled by a dying saint. "On the 14th of February," she relates, "Sœur Anne Madeleine felt her life failing, and asked Mère Nogaret to summon the reverend father rector of the Society of Jesus, in whom she had perfect confidence. When he came, she requested him to receive a general confession of her life. The father, knowing perfectly well the purity of her soul, for she had frequently confessed to him, at first refused, alleging her state of excessive languor: but our beloved sister answered with mingled energy and respect: 'God is just, father, and I am a sinner. Believe me, He asks this of me.' Unwilling to contradict her, the reverend father consented to her wish, and admired, while he listened to her confession, the calm of her soul, and the exact precision with which she expressed herself. After receiving absolution, she remained absorbed in God for a considerable space of time. The reverend father remained motionless, filled with admiration at this touching spectacle, and fearing to interrupt the sacred and solemn communications of the Spouse at the approach of the supreme moment. When she came to herself, he asked her in what manner her soul had been occupied. 'Father,' she replied, with inflamed

countenance, 'how great are the mercies of God! Speak to me of the Heart of Jesus. . . .' The father found no difficulty in acceding to her request; his own heart was full to overflowing. After satisfying her wishes, he blessed her, and withdrew, promising to return early on the following day. It is to be remarked, that from her childhood Sœur Anne Madeleine had always been directed by the religious of the Company of Jesus. On her entry into her first monastery she had the consolation of seeing that her superiors shared her feelings of esteem and confidence towards this Society. These excellent fathers also considerably assisted her in propagating devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and God allowed her the grace of being assisted by them up to the last. She had not yet received the last Sacraments: towards midnight, as her strength was completely failing her, she said with great calmness to her sister, the infirmarian: 'My sister, I feel that I am dying. . . . Let them bring me quickly the last Sacraments.'

"It was considered advisable, however, to wait until morning. In the interval, some words escaped her indicative of a fear of the judgments of God: but soon the sweet serenity and joy that reappeared upon her countenance, testified that love had triumphed over fear. Seeing the sisters around her weeping bitterly, she said to them: 'Do not weep, I beg of you, dear sisters; we must

only think of submitting with love to the will of our God.' The sister who had been appointed her assistant in the housekeeping, and who had a special love for her, drew nigh to her bed, and asked her not to forget her before God. 'How could I forget you, my beloved sister,' she replied in the most touching manner, 'how could I forget you to whom I owe so much?'

"The furnace of love which consumed her became meanwhile more and more ardent in proportion as the end approached. No longer able to contain her transports, she broke forth in burning words at beholding the Spouse coming so quickly towards her, coming hastily across the hills. At four o'clock in the morning she was sinking rapidly, and at her request holy Viaticum was administered. Ravished out of herself at the sight of the Beloved of her soul, she exclaimed: 'Is it then true that this is the happy moment when I am to lose myself in the Sacred Heart of Jesus? I am but a sinner, but I trust that He will show mercy to me.'

"Turning then to her sisters, she said to them: 'Rejoice at my happiness, beloved sisters. The reign of sin is about to be destroyed in me.' Then she renewed her vows, in accordance with our custom, after having humbly asked pardon of the community for her pretended bad example, and of her superior for her want of submission. They knew well that she had ever been the best of



daughters and the most exemplary of sisters. Inexpressible were the general grief and emotion. After she had received the divine Host, her heart relieved itself in transports of love, until her soul took flight and was united to the adorable Heart of Jesus. She expired at five o'clock in the morning. Kneeling beside her mortal remains our sisters recited, in accordance with her recommendation, the Litanies of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Already on her countenance were reflected the joys of the eternal kingdom; and a whisper of beatitude seemed to fill the monastery. The sisters could not take their gaze from off the beloved face. She died on the 15th February, 1730."\*

Sœur Anne Madeleine went to heaven in her thirty-third year, and the eighteenth year of her entry into religion. Scarcely had she closed her eyes when the nuns hastened to communicate the sad intelligence to Monseigneur de Belzunce. The pious bishop came at once to the deathbed of his daughter, and offered holy Mass in the monastery church for the repose of the beloved soul. In the afternoon he returned, at the head of his chapter, in order to celebrate the solemn obsequies. It was touching to see the holy prelate invoking the blessings of the Church over the mortal remains of the holy nun who had been the principal instrument of the salvation of his people, and who had

\* *Vie, etc.*, c. 13.

obtained for his episcopal town the honour of being the first consecrated to the beloved Heart of Jesus Christ.

Laid before the altar, the departed one seemed as if wrapped in the sweet majesty of a spouse of Jesus Christ, and immolated with her Master on the altar of the cross. The final destruction which consummates the sacrifice is an action that gives supreme honour to the Divinity. Anne Madeleine had submitted lovingly ; as a true spouse of the slain Lamb, she had rejoiced in the annihilation whereby she confessed the infinite Being ; she had offered the holocaust to the Heart of Jesus as the homage of her own loving heart. And now in death her face reflected a ray of the beatific light, whilst from her sacred remains was wafted a perfume, the perfume of sacrifice. Who can doubt but that this sweet odour was accepted by the Heart of Jesus, hidden there in His tabernacle, and that it consoled Him for the ingratitude and the crimes of men. The eager multitude flocked to the altar rails, that they might gaze upon the features of the noble victim, and might satisfy their devotion by touching her mortal remains with rosary, cross, and medal. To content them, Monseigneur de Belzunce permitted the entry of the public to the cloister. When the door was opened, so great was the pressure of the crowd, that it was with difficulty that her coffin was lowered into the tomb. The people

then begged to be shown the cell that had been inhabited by the sister ; in an instant everything was carried off: crucifix, writings, images ; nothing escaped this pious robbery. The whole of Marseilles was moved at their irreparable loss, and on all sides resounded the words : "The saint is dead."\*

The heart of the deceased had been removed in haste before the celebration of the last rites. The surgeons were therefore obliged to go down into the vault three days after the burial in order to close up the opening. To their great astonishment they perceived a pink colour in the cheeks, and no change in the features. The eyes were life-like, the eyelids unwrinkled, and the members had retained their suppleness. From the arm they drew several drops of pure red liquid blood. On her bosom was traceable the form of a heart of a reddish hue, and about the size of the palm of the hand of a little child. The doctors made attestation that this mark was certainly supernatural. It was the miraculous trace of the signal grace that the Sacred Heart had accorded her in wounding her with the arrow of Its love. This sacred wound had occasioned also an elevation on the chest, which went down at the hour of death. On the arm likewise of the deceased was found the trace

\* Circular of the first monastery of the Visitation of Marseilles, 15th Feb., 1730 ; Letter of Monseigneur de Belzunce, already quoted ; *Vie*, etc., c. 13.

of a heart which she had stamped upon it eleven years previously, and which was hard, white in appearance, and slightly raised. Adorned with these noble wounds, the body of Anne Madeleine reposed for a considerable time in the crypt of the old Visitation. During the pillage of the last century it was taken, together with other remains, to the cemetery of St. Charles, where it was placed in the vault of the Visitandines of Marseilles. But her heart, still intact after a century and a half, is preserved as a precious relic in the new first monastery of Marseilles.\*

In the beautiful letter that he wrote concerning his spiritual daughter, Monseigneur de Belzunce thus expresses himself: "It is most remarkable that the opinion entertained at Marseilles concerning Sœur de Rémusat has undergone no change whatever; her memory is still venerated in the highest degree. She is affectionately remembered by all who conversed with her, or whom she had counselled in the way of salvation. Those who were honoured in some small measure by her confidence and friendship, rejoice with reason at having such a powerful friend at the court of heaven. Many persons, especially in her own community, preserve with the utmost respect as precious relics everything that was used by her; they pray to her, making pilgrimages to her tomb to implore her intercession for them with the

\* Circular quoted above; *Vie*, etc., c. 14.

Sacred Heart of Jesus."\* This testimony of the greatest bishop of Marseilles, next to St. Lazarus, is a splendid confirmation of the praise that resounded throughout the town in honour of Sœur Anne Madeleine. It was in vain that attempts were made to involve her in the unjust attacks that were directed against Père Girard, the last director of her conscience. In vain did the Jansenists in fury term her a stigmatized and bewitched girl, one possessed of the devil, and a sorceress. In vain also did these obstinate heretics point to her letters and her other writings as containing, not only the errors of Quietism, but as mysteries of iniquity.† Whilst these atrocious calumnies were vomited forth by hell, prayer, humble and confiding, rose up from the tomb of the apostle of the Sacred Heart, and the glory of this generous virgin of Jesus Christ began to appear. God worked prodigies on her tomb. A sick, bedridden Visitandine learnt the death of her spiritual sister by a sudden light which shone in her cell, and by the impression of a mysterious embrace. Others received through her intercession both spiritual and temporal graces. One sick had the happiness of beholding her wrapped in the splendour of heaven, offering to God the Sacred Heart of Jesus, together with the merits of the Virgin Mary, and obtaining a speedy

\* Letter to Mère de Gréard.

† Letter of Monseigneur de Belzunce, quoted above.

cure for him, among other favours. Many other souls, among them an unworthy priest, were converted through her powerful intercession. The memory of Sœur Anne Madeleine was in benediction, and great was her credit with the Heart of God.

We might here conclude this history, had it been our aim merely to set forth the virtues of Sœur Anne Madeleine. But it will be remembered that we undertook to throw a new light upon her magnificent mission. We have yet, then, to describe summarily the admirable consequences of her mission, and thus put the finishing stroke to our own work. The providential mission of Sœur Anne Madeleine went on for long after her death, and the culminating glory of her mission, the consecration of the town of Marseilles to the Heart of Jesus, had a wide-spread influence throughout the history of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. In its own proportion, we may compare the work of Sœur Anne Madeleine to the tree planted in the midst of the city, which bore twelve fruits, and shed its fruit each month.\* This ever increasing fecundity had been predicted by the pious Visitandine a few days before her death, when she announced that the worship of the Sacred Heart would attain fresh growths which she should not live to behold. Conformably to this prophetic word, the tree has grown; it is still

\* Apoc. xiii. 2.

growing, and we see it in these days loaded with salutary fruits for men and for society. Is it not just to attribute the glory of this marvellous fecundity to her, after God, who planted the fruitful tree?

Celebrating the mercies of the Heart of Jesus, and the happiness of Marseilles, vowed for ever to this beloved Heart, Monseigneur de Belzunce said in a holy transport to his people: "Announce your deliverance, and publish it to the extremities of the world; publish the glory of your Liberator among the nations, and His wonders among all the people with whom you hold commercial intercourse. Announce to them that you owe your salvation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus alone, and that to Him alone they also must look for strength and consolation in all their tribulations."\* These eloquent words assigned to Marseilles her new mission. Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, when of old they had landed on these shores, bringing the faith of Christ, had taught the old city its providential vocation. In those primitive times it was to be, not for Provence alone, but for the whole of Gaul, the very homestead of Christian life. Later on, when the light was extinguished in the Levant, when the candlestick which lighted the Eastern churches was taken away from its place,† and the terrible scourge of Mussulman infidelity was implanted in that land of prodigies and of saints,

\* Decree of 21st Sept., 1722.

† Apoc. ii. 5.

Marseilles was once more called to restore, through her commercial intercourse with the East, the living Christianity that had come to her from those far distant shores. But in the eighteenth century her mission was completed, and the glory of her vocation still more enhanced by her consecration to the Heart of Jesus. Then did Henri de Belzunce and Anne Madeleine, the high priest and the virgin, the successor of Lazarus and the descendant of Martha, bind a noblest diadem of joy and honour\* round the brow of their beloved city. Thenceforward Marseilles became especially the city of the Sacred Heart. In obedience to the pious inspirations, or let me rather say, the prophetic words of her bishop, she honoured the Sacred Heart, not only within her own walls, but likewise she extended its worship throughout the East, and was an important agent in the propagation of this devotion in France and elsewhere.

One word first about the East. We have already seen that, by the influence of Sœur Anne Madeleine, a confraternity of the Sacred Heart had been established at Cairo, and the new devotion introduced into Constantinople. In 1733, a confraternity was erected in this capital, in the suburb of Galata: it was composed in all probability of Marseillaise merchants, whose affairs necessitated their presence in the states of the Sultan. From thence the apostolate spread through the valley of

\* Isa. xxviii, 5.



the Mediterranean. The Christians of the various rites of Syria were rallied under the banner of the Heart of Jesus, in the churches of the Jesuits, at Antoura, the Capuchins of Aleppo, and the Maronites of Damascus, and marvels of grace and salvation were wrought in these countries.\* Let us not forget that thus were sown in the East the first germs of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, that has since made such marvellous progress there.

I said above, that within the walls of Marseilles devotion to the divine Heart never flagged. Each year beheld the faithful accomplishment of the vow. Whilst the nations denied Christ, the King of souls and of society, there was one town in the world who every year implicitly acknowledged His sacred royalty by the homage that it paid to the Heart of its true Sovereign. This fealty was always rendered, even in the disastrous times of the Revolution. It is true that the magistrates of the town more than once falsified the vow of their predecessors, but what else could be expected from men who had denied the Church? They were replaced by fervent Catholics, who, in the name of the faithful populace, celebrated with faith the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Even during the years of the Terror, the feast was kept, unknown to those who were breaking up the altars, and massacring the ministers of religion. The Abbé Raymonet,

\* Le P. Daniel, S.J., *Hist. de la B. Marguerite Marie*, c. 29.

and the Carthusian Dom Joseph, together with the nuns of the Visitation who had been driven out from their cloister, and among whom was Madame de Rémusat, the great-niece of Sœur Anne Madeleine assembled secretly in a private house, and there offered to the Heart of Jesus Christ the love and devotion of His faithful Marseillais.\*

It was in the year 1795 that the Feast of the Sacred Heart was again solemnized publicly in the churches of the town; but the votive procession was only re-established in 1807, under the administration of M. d'Anthoine. Since then the feast has been religiously kept every year. Nevertheless, in 1871, the municipality of Marseilles, who belonged to a hostile party, refused to fulfil the promises of its predecessors. But the friends of the Sacred Heart were watching, and were determined to pay the secular tribute of gratitude. In conjunction with the nuns of the Visitation, they addressed themselves to a select committee of men who had united with a view to overcoming the evils of the times. The president of the committee was M. Delvil-Martiny, a famous barrister and zealous defender of Catholic interests. He was related, through Madame Martiny, *née de Sollières*, to the family of Sœur Anne Madeleine, and was on this account chosen to represent the

\* A. Laforet, the Plague of 1720, in the *Revue de Marseilles*, of 1863.

Catholics of Marseilles, and to offer to the Sacred Heart, in their name, the taper adorned with the escutcheon of the city. All the pious families were convoked, and when the feast dawned, an unwonted multitude filled the courtyard and church of the Visitation, and overflowed even into the street. The Holy Sacrifice was offered by M. le Vicaire Général Fourquier, and at the moment of the offertory, the great nephew of Sœur de Rémusat came forward and presented the traditional candle. There were a considerable number of communicants, and the piety displayed recalled the time of the first institution. In the evening, the votive procession wound through the nave of the cathedral, and he who had presented the blessed candle in the name of the Catholics of Marseilles now followed the Blessed Sacrament as it was borne in the hands of the venerable successor of Belzunce. The Bishop of Marseilles was surrounded by the elect of his flock, and the homage that was on that day rendered by this faithful people to the Heart of Jesus surpassed anything that had been seen for half a century.

On the Feast of the Sacred Heart, in the year following, as the municipality still held back, the chamber of commerce fulfilled the vow. The president, M. Armand, one of the most distinguished and Catholic men of the town, presented the candle in the name of his fellow-citizens. The crowd was great in the chapel of the Visitation,

and it was necessary to distribute Holy Communion even in the courtyard of the monastery. Thus, during the disastrous years that came upon France, the glorious pact of 1722 was faithfully kept at Marseilles. Since then the tradition has been once more upheld by the municipality, and the obligations of the city have been piously carried out by a Catholic mayor, M. Rabuteau, who has permitted the votive procession through the streets and public places, to the great joy of the entire city.

One word only have we now to say concerning the influence throughout France of the work of Sœur Anne Madeleine. After the great events of 1722, the Feast of the Sacred Heart was placed in the calendar as one of the most solemn feasts of the year, throughout the dioceses of Aix, Arles, and Toulon, who followed the example of Marseilles, as, like it, they had been delivered from the attacks of the plague through the protection of the Heart of Jesus. The example of these ancient and illustrious cities had a powerful influence over the rest of France.\* It is to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that France owes all her gratitude for having enabled her to break the glacial fetters of Jansenism, to escape from the fury of revolutions, and the snares of Gallicanism. If she is ever enabled to rise and resume her glorious mission, it will be because the church of France is the eldest daugh-

\* Le B, P. Daniel, *Hist. de la B. Marguerite Marie*, c. 29.

ter of the Heart of Jesus Christ, as well as the kingdom of Mary Immaculate. It is owing to this divine Heart that she has been so fertile in learned and valiant prelates, in admirable priests, courageous missionaries, fervent virgins, and has been the cradle of all the great Catholic undertakings. But the fountain head of this wonderful devotion has ever been the region comprised between the diocese of Autun and the diocese of Marseilles, between the tomb of Lazarus and the cathedral of Lazarus, the splendid casket that encloses the mortal remains of the virgin of Paray, and the humble coffin that received the dust of her sister of the South. This is evident throughout the history of this sweet devotion. The great pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial in June, 1873, is one among many proofs of the truth of this fact. Among all the towns of France and of the whole world, Marseilles walked foremost in the triumphal procession, and amid the general enthusiasm the voices of her children uttered loud and clear their watchword,

*Live the Sacred Heart!*

Before we conclude this book, we must give honour to Sœur Anne Madeleine for a work for which her labours had doubtless prepared the way beforehand through a design of God. Two great religious orders have, as is well known, received the mission of propagating throughout the Catholic universe the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

These are the Company of Jesus and the Visitation Sainte Marie. They have always fulfilled most admirably their glorious mission. But as in these days the worship of the Sacred Heart was to be still more developed, Providence raised up in the beginning of this century another great institution, the Society of the Sacred Heart. The end of this society is to communicate to souls, by the means of education and instruction, the infinite treasures of grace that are contained in this Heart. Even then the number of the servants of the Sacred Heart was not yet complete in the divine thought. There were many others who, in different religious congregations and in other innumerable ways, served and glorified Him; but it was fitting that He should be honoured by Mary as well as by Martha, by the contemplative as well as by the active life.\* Therefore, by the side of the great institution we have just named, there rose up another, more hidden and more humble, which may be termed the *Contemplative Sacred Heart*. New altars have arisen to satisfy the devotion of the

\* The Company of Jesus, the Society of the Sacred Heart, and even the Visitation, on account of their schools, are, properly speaking, mixed Orders, where the contemplative life is mingled with the active life. According to the doctrine of St. Thomas, the purely contemplative life has for its exclusive objects the contemplation of the divine truth, and includes only in a subjective and quasi-secondary manner the moral virtues and the consideration of the works of God. *Symm. Theol.*, IIq. IIq. q. clxxx. a. 3.

many fervent souls whom a glorious apostolate has gained to the Heart of Jesus Christ. The Church exposes to public veneration the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and at His feet in adoring expiation kneel the elect among these souls. Beside the priests, who in the light of the Sacred Heart evangelize the earth, God has placed virgins, who pray without ceasing that their ministry may be fruitful; and by the side of those active virgins who, in forming Christian women, labour to render society conformable to the image of the Heart of Jesus, kneel the contemplative virgins, whose mission is to immolate themselves as pure victims before the Blessed Sacrament, exposed day and night, in order that by their sacrifice they may aid in the re-establishment of the reign of Jesus Christ, and in the exaltation of His adorable Heart.\*

\* Madame Barat, who was, together with Père Varin, the foundress of the Society of the Sacred Heart, had wonderful lights concerning the aim of the devotion to the Heart of the Man-God. She understood that two great things were needed in order to the exaltation of the divine Heart: first, a vast apostolate; and then a perpetual adoration and expiation before the Blessed Sacrament. She had devoted herself and her daughters to the first of these works, and consequently she could not undertake the second; but she never forgot it, and in 1816 she even laid the foundation of the new Congregation, in instituting the perpetual adoration in the novitiate of Paris, and inculcating on the members of her society the spirit of expiatory victims. See l'Abbé Baunart, *Hist. de Madam Barat*, book III., c. 3; book IV.,

It was beside the tomb of Sœur Anne Madeleine that the first idea of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Jesus was inspired to a soul connected by the ties of kindred with the pious Visitandine. The double aim of this new congregation was the very same that the ardent lover of the Sacred Heart had learnt from her divine Master, and had imparted to the souls under her direction, and to the confraternities that she had instituted. Contemplating day and night the wound in the Heart of the slain Lamb, these virgins shall offer themselves in holocaust to repair the sins of souls who wound Him most sensibly. They shall likewise, in imitation of the Virgin of Calvary and of the altar, pray that the Church and the Pontiff of God may triumph over their enemies, and that the Heart of Jesus the King may receive homage, praise, and thanksgiving, not from individual souls alone, but from the nations. They shall ask that, following the example of Marseilles, all cities and kingdoms may bow down before Him, and just as of old St. Theresa in all her prayers and austerities had chiefly in view the salvation of France, so shall they pray with especial fervour that the eldest daughter of the Church may resume her glorious mission of protecting Catholic interests throughout the entire

c. 1; book VI., c. 3. Madame Barat also said: "Carmel should be implanted in the Sacred Heart as the most beautiful tree in this sweet garden." *Ibid.*, book viii., c. 4.



universe. By a mysterious decree of His providence, God has led this infant congregation from its birth-place in the south, to the north, where, under the protection of one of the most illustrious and enlightened princes of the Church,\* they can assist at the building of a sanctuary as a memorial of the consecration of pious Belgium to the Sacred Heart.† A portion of this religious family have dispersed into other parts to found new houses.‡ The rest have remained in Belgium, and kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament in their provisional sanctuary, they offer in spirit unceasingly to the divine Majesty the theandric Blood whereby the nations are healed, souls are redeemed, and the earth cleansed from her iniquities.

In conclusion, let us say one last word in honour

\* The decree for the erection of the first monastery of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart of the monastery of Berchem-les-Anvers, was signed on the 8th December, 1872, by Monseigneur the Archbishop of Malines, now Cardinal Dechamps.

† This sanctuary is to be seen at Berchem-les-Anvers by the side of the monastery. His Holiness Pope Pius IX. sent the first stone of the edifice, and it was laid on the 8th of September, 1875, by the Papal representative, Monseigneur Vannutelli.

‡ A second monastery of the Daughters of the Heart of Jesus was erected at Aix, the capital of Provence, in accordance with the wish of his Eminence Monseigneur Forcade, Archbishop of Aix. Other dioceses await similar foundations.

of the Church of Marseilles. She has become more fruitful than ever in holy souls since she has consecrated herself to the Heart of Jesus Christ. Would that she might never forget this most noble of all her triumphs. The statue of the generous Belzunce ornaments the public ways, but nowhere is seen the image of Sœur Rémusat, and her ashes rest in an obscure grave. Neither do we meet with a church of the Sacred Heart, although, owing to the piety of the people, one was commenced in 1821, on the centenary of the plague. And yet it is\* incredible that the city *par excellence* of the Heart of Jesus, who in a considerable degree inaugurated the great movement of devotion to which we are eye-witnesses, should remain much longer deprived of a sanctuary of the Sacred Heart; nor that within its walls there should not be found a cloister like that of the Sacred Heart in Belgium, where day and night kneel holy virgins whose mission is to adore and to make reparation to this divine Heart. Rather let us infer, from the works already accomplished, that Providence prepares afar a new triumph for the Heart of Jesus.

\* The first stone was solemnly laid by Monseigneur de Beausset, Archbishop of Aix, in the presence of the civil, military, and religious authorities, amidst great state, on the Place Saint Ferréol. The prefecture now stands on the spot, but there is no trace of a church, and even the monument which pointed out the place of the foundation stone has been removed.

Perhaps indeed it will be to the Daughters of the Heart of Jesus, the inheritors of the spirit of Anne Madeleine, that He will confide the mission of building this new sanctuary in His honour.

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"Did Catholic England ever contribute to the Church a more precious treasure than these REVELATIONS OF MOTHER JULIANA, the Anchoress of Edward the Third's days! She may be compared with the B. Henry Suso, and even so carry off the palm."—*Dr. Faber, All for Jesus, p. 162.*









